Lecture 6
The Enchanted World and Beyond

At the end of the first lecture, I set out the following passage from a letter that Leibniz wrote to Nicolas Remond in 1714, at the end of his life:

> I discovered Aristotle as a lad, and even the Scholastics did not repel me; even now I do not regret this. After having finished the trivial schools, I fell upon the moderns, and I recall walking in a grove on the outskirts of Leipzig called the Rosental, at the age of fifteen, and deliberating whether to preserve substantial forms or not. Mechanism finally prevailed and led me to apply myself to mathematics. It is true I did not penetrate into its depths until after some conversations with Mr. Huygens in Paris. But when I looked for the ultimate reasons for mechanism, and even for the laws of motion, I was greatly surprised to see that they could not be found in mathematics but that I should have to return to metaphysics. This led me back to entelechies, and from the material to the formal, and at last brought me to understand after many corrections and forward steps in my thinking, that monads or simple substances are the only true substances and that material things are only phenomena, though well founded and well connected. [Leibniz to Remond, Jan. 10 1714; G III 606 (L 654-5)]

In the previous lectures I have traced the path that Leibniz took from mechanism to monads, at least in bare outline. Let me briefly review the main steps.

We began after Leibniz's conversion to mechanism, in the late 1660s and early 1670s, when Leibniz was in his mid-20s. At that moment Leibniz, deeply influenced by the natural philosophy of Hobbes, believed in a world of extended and moving bodies, supplemented in a very non-Hobbesian way with minds, located at points. But there were two main deficiencies in this world. One came from the fact that in a world of purely extended bodies, there are no genuine individuals: every body is divisible to infinity, and at no point can we find something that is a genuine unity. The second problem is that in the mechanist world of his youth, bodies are completely inert. As a consequence they offer no resistance to one another in collision; one body, however small, can set another body, however large into motion without losing any of its own, in violation of the metaphysical principle that there must be as much force or power in the cause as there is in the effect. Furthermore, in a world of purely extended bodies the notion of motion is completely ungrounded: there is no distinction between a body in motion and a body at rest. For these reasons, in 1679, Leibniz makes a radically reactionary proposal: he argues that we must revive the substantial forms of the scholastics which the mechanical philosophers like Descartes had rejected years before. This is how he puts it in the outline of a book, never written, which he drafted in the enthusiasm of the moment:

> There follows now a discussion of incorporeal things. Certain things take place in body which cannot be explained from the necessity of matter alone. Such are the laws of motion, which depend upon the metaphysical principle of the equality of cause and effect. Therefore we must deal here with the soul and show that all things are animated. Without soul or form of some kind, body would have no being, because no part of it can be designated which does not in turn consist of more parts. Thus nothing could be designated in a body which could be called ‘this thing,’ or a unity. [A6.4.1988; L 278-9]

This is the “return to metaphysics” that Leibniz mentions in his letter to Remond, the beginning of the passage from the material to the formal. In the years that follow, in the 1680s and through the 1690s, Leibniz outlines a world of corporeal substances, unities of form and matter, soul and body, understood on analogy with us, human beings, a world teeming with living creatures, which, in turn, are made up of smaller living creatures, bugs in bugs to infinity. The soul or form is supposed to make each such corporeal substance a genuine individual, while it also serves as the grounds of its activity, allowing him to distinguish motion and rest, and the matter is to serve as the grounds of the resistance that a corporeal substance exerts in response to the activity of others.

But there were still “many corrections and forward steps” to be made in Leibniz's thinking. The world of corporeal substances, too, had its difficulties. Though the organism was unified by virtue of its soul, Leibniz came to believe that it wasn’t unified enough: only a simple substance, a substance without parts and thus without extension could be a genuine individual. Furthermore, the infinitely nested succession of organisms, bugs in bugs left no place to put the passive force of resistance that Leibniz identified with primary matter. For these reasons, Leibniz passed beyond the world of corporeal substances and to the world of monads, simple substances, without parts and without extension, mind-like entities that were genuinely one and which could be the ultimate seat of matter. The world of corporeal substance of his middle years thus turned out to be just a half-way house to his final position, “that monads or simple substances are the only true substances and that material things are only phenomena, though well founded and well connected,” as he wrote to Remond. As we saw in the last lecture, while there are possible suggestions of this position in earlier writings, it is first announced as Leibniz's considered view in the letters he wrote to de Volder starting in 1702, and continuing on in the years that follow. A classic statement occurs in this passage from the letter of 30 June 1704:

[SLIDE]

> Indeed, considering the matter carefully it should be said that there is nothing in things except simple substances and in them perception and appetite; moreover, matter and motion are not so much substances or things as phenomena of perceivers, whose reality is situated in the harmony of perceivers with themselves (at different times) and with other perceivers. [L to de Volder, 30 June 1704, G II 270]

In this way the twin problems of unity and activity drive Leibniz from a heterodox Hobbesian mechanism to a world of corporeal substances conceived as organisms, ending up “after many corrections and forward steps” in a kind of radical idealism, the enchanted world of monads.

The letter to Remond from which I quoted was a response to a fawning letter that Remond had sent him shortly before. Remond began his letter as follows: “Since I read your *Theodicy*, I have not ceased thanking God for having allowed me to be born in a century enlightened by a mind such as yours.” [Remond to L, 2 June 1713, G III 603] It is not surprising that Leibniz, not a modest man, couldn’t resist such words. He replied by entering into a warm exchange with Remond. Nicolas Remond was the head counselor to the Duc d’Orleans in Paris, a position of great influence, if not power. Leibniz saw in Remond (and in his patroness, the Duchesse d’Orleans, who knew Leibniz's patroness in

Hanover) the possibility of an invitation to Paris, and who knows what further honors. But Leibniz was also interested in Remond as a person who might help him to publicize his philosophy in high places. Remond was clearly interested in Leibniz's philosophy; indeed, there was some loose talk of Remond sponsoring poetic version of Leibniz's philosophy, to be written by his friend the abbé Fraguier, a kind of Leibnizian *De rerum natura*. [G III 616, 621] At the time that Leibniz received the first letter from Remond in late 1713, he was in Vienna, where he had been absent without leave since December 1712 or January 1713, much to the annoyance of his employers in Hanover. (He was to remain there until late August or early September 1714, much to the even greater annoyance of his employers, leaving only in the hopes of catching the last boat to England when his employer George, Elector of Hanover was made King George I.) In Vienna he was well received, made Privy Counselor to the Emperor Karl VI (with an extra salary, of course), and given access to the documents that he needed for his history of the House of Hanover. In Vienna, Leibniz also served as the representative of the Elector of Hanover in some delicate diplomatic maneuvers in the Imperial Court, though I suspect that this did not fully make up for his unexcused absence from home. In Vienna, Leibniz also made contact with Prince Eugène of Savoy, who commanded the Imperial armies. [Aiton 313] Eugène, was well-placed, royal, and, most importantly for Leibniz, shared many of Leibniz's philosophical interests. Like Remond, he offered Leibniz the opportunity of making his philosophical ideas known in high circles.

At the moment when Leibniz received his letter from Remond, it wasn't easy to learn the details of Leibniz's metaphysics. When Remond complained about that, Leibniz replied:

> It is true that my *Theodicy* isn't enough to give the entire body of my system, but in joining to it what I published in different journals, … not a lot is missing, at least with respect to the principles. [L to Remond July 1714, G III 618]

It is true that the details of Leibniz's metaphysical system can be found scattered through the journals, as well as touched upon in the *Theodicy* itself. But Leibniz also recognized that this wasn't really enough. In the opening sentence of the letter, Leibniz told Remond that "I had hoped to add to this letter some further explanations about monads which you seemed to ask for, but it grew in my hands, and several distractions have prevented me from finishing it so soon." [G III 618] But Leibniz had been working on such a summary account of his thought, not only for Remond but also for Prince Eugène.

These further explanations were to become two finished essays, the *Principles of Nature and Grace*, and the *Monadology*. The *Principles* was finished first, given to Eugène and sent to Remond by the end of August, before Leibniz left Vienna. The *Monadology* was finished soon after, and presumably given to both as well, though the history of its final draft is rather murky. Both are intended to be popular statements of Leibniz's system, and intended to make his views more accessible to a wider audience. Although there are some interesting differences, which I may note later, they cover much the same material. Since there is reason to believe that the *Monadology* was written because he was not altogether satisfied with the treatment of the material in the PNG (the evidence is not overwhelming, but it is there),[1] let us concentrate for the moment on the treatment Leibniz gives in the *Monadology*.

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[1] See Boehm 1957, p. 247.

The *Monadology* is a systematic but brief treatment of some of the main themes from Leibniz's metaphysics that we have already seen, together with much more. It begins with a rather stark announcement of the basic ontology, very much as he had presented it to de Volder more than ten years earlier:

> 1. The monad, which we shall discuss here, is nothing but a simple substance that enters into composites--simple, that is, without parts….
> 2. And there must be simple substances, since there are composites; for the composite is nothing more than a collection, or aggregate, of simples.
> 3. But where there are no parts, neither extension, nor shape, nor divisibility is possible. These monads are the true atoms of nature and, in brief, the elements of things.

At the center of the ontology is the simple substance, the true atom of nature, the ultimate element of things. There must be simple substances because there are composites. It is interesting here that Leibniz doesn't say composite *substances*. While he talks freely about composite substances in the PNG, in the *Monadology* he never uses the locution once. This is no casual omission. When a copyist had written "composite substances" in a draft of §2 and crossed it out, Leibniz added his own barring, just to make sure that there was no mistake. [Boehm 235] In the sections that follow, Leibniz goes on to develop the details of this picture. He first discusses the monads: what monads are, that they have only perception and appetite, the difference between bare monads and human souls, etc. After a presentation of his two great principles, the Principle of Contradiction and the Principle of Sufficient Reason, he turns to God, "the primitive unity or the first [*originaire*] simple substance" [§ 47] and the relation between God and the created simple substances. Starting in § 61, Leibniz begins to talk about composites, not composite *substances*, but just composites.[2] Bodies are quickly identified as instances of composites. The discussion begins in earnest with a discussion of the bodies that bear particular relations to a given monad: each monad has its own body. (§ 62). The picture that he paints in the sections that follow is very similar, in a way, to the corporeal substance view that we saw in earlier lectures. It is a world inhabited by living creatures at every level, bugs in bugs to infinity. He writes:

> 66. From this we see that there is a world of creatures, of living beings, of animals, of entelechies, of souls in the least part of matter.
> 67. Each portion of matter can be conceived as a garden full of plants, and as a pond full of fish. But each branch of a plant, each limb of an animal, each drop of its humors, is still another such garden or pond.

And as in the corporeal substance view, these living things are conceived of as souls that unite organic bodies which are, in turn, made up of smaller organic bodies, and so on to infinity:

> 70. Thus we see that each living body has a dominant entelechy, which in the animal is the soul; but the limbs of this living body are full of other living beings, plants, animals, each of which also has its entelechy, or its dominant soul.

This view is similar, but notice here that Leibniz very carefully *doesn't* say that these organisms, soul and body constitute substances. The *Monadology* then ends with a sketch

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[2] Embarassingly enough, this is incorrectly translated in AG. It will be corrected in a second edition, currently under preparation.

of the hypothesis of pre-established harmony and a discussion of the City of God, the community that we as human souls make up with God.

In a way this should look very familiar to the reader of the earlier writings, the Correspondence with Arnauld, for example. There is the familiar world of organisms, bugs in bugs which Leibniz had outlined to Arnauld, even if they are not identified as corporeal substances. And it should look familiar to the reader of the later part of the de Volder correspondence. The world is grounded in some way in simple, non-extended monads. But here is the problem. There is a conspicuous lacuna in the exposition, indeed a gaping hole. Leibniz passes deftly from the discussion of monads to the discussion of composites, that is, bodies. *But he never really tells the reader how the two are related*. At the basis are simple substances. And then there are bodies, composite *somethings*. But how are the simple substances related to the bodies? And what metaphysical status do these bodies have in the metaphysics of the *Monadology*?

Leibniz has little to say about this in his published writings. On the other hand, it is discussed at some length in his correspondence with de Volder. [Again, I thank Paul Lodge for sharing his editions and translations with me.] But the way he discusses the question there suggests to me that he hasn't really come to a settled view.

Let's look first at the position that Leibniz advances in the of 20 June, 1703. If you remember, this was the first letter in which Leibniz set out to explain his new view that all substances are simple. This is the summary that he gives of the basic metaphysics of substance and body:

> For the rest, in the Monad, or complete simple substance, I do not unite anything with the entelechy except a primitive passive force, which is related to the whole mass of the organic body. Indeed, the remaining subordinate monads placed in the organs do not make up a part of [the organic body], although they are immediately required for it, and they come together with the primary monad for the organic corporeal substance, or animal or plant. I therefore distinguish: (1) the primitive entelechy or soul; (2) matter, namely primary matter or primitive passive power; (3) the monad completed by these two things; (4) the mass or secondary matter, or organic machine for which innumerable subordinate monads come together; and (5) the animal, or corporeal substance, which the monad dominating in the machine makes into one thing. [L to de Volder, 20 June 1703, G II 252]

In this passage, Leibniz conceives of the monad as consisting of a soul and primary matter. However, "mass or secondary matter" consists of an aggregate of monads. When such an aggregate itself is appropriately organized and has a dominant monad, it constitutes "one thing," which Leibniz explicitly identifies as a corporeal substance, though it isn't clear exactly what this means in this context. But later in the same letter, Leibniz seems to present a somewhat different picture, one on which bodies are taken to be phenomenal in some sense:

> But in the phenomena, or the resulting aggregate, everything is indeed explained mechanically, and masses are understood to impel one another. And in these phenomena nothing is needed except the consideration of derivative forces, once it is agreed where they result from, namely, the phenomena of aggregates from the reality of monads. [L to de Volder, 20 June 1703, G II 250]

There are obscurities here, to be sure. But even so, the corporeal substances that appear in the earlier passage of the same letter seem to have gone missing. It seems that bodies are understood simply as aggregates of monads. Such aggregates are phenomenal insofar as they are unified not in themselves, but by us: "But since simple things alone are true things, the rest are only beings through aggregation, and therefore phenomena, and, as Democritus used to say, exist by convention not by nature." [L to de Volder, 20 June 1703, G II 252]

Seven months later, Leibniz seems to have moved explicitly to the more austere metaphysics suggested in these passages. Bodies are aggregates of monads, but now he seems to have rejected the view that there can be complex substances made up out of monads, corporeal substances, as he seemed to hold in his initial expositions of the view:

> Bodies, which are commonly taken for substances, are nothing but real phenomena, and are no more substances than perihelia or rainbows, and this is not something that is overturned by touch any more than by sight. The monad alone is a substance, a body is substances not a substance." [L to de Volder, 21 January 1704, G II 262]

Bodies here continue to be aggregates of monads, as they had been a bit before. But the view doesn't seem to be stable. In a letter to de Volder written six months later he notes:

> But accurately speaking matter is not composed of constitutive unities, rather it results from them, since matter or extended mass is nothing but a phenomenon founded in things, like the rainbow or the parhelion. And there is no reality in anything except the reality of unities, and so phenomena can always be divided into lesser phenomena which could appear to other more subtle animals, and the smallest phenomena may never be reached. Substantial unities are not really parts, but the foundations of the phenomena. [L to de Volder, 30 June 1704, G II 268]

Here he explicitly denies what he had suggested earlier, that bodies are made up of monads. Instead, monads are "the foundations of the phenomena." Unfortunately, there is not time to unpack what Leibniz means by this somewhat obscure phrase. His point seems to be that collections of monads are somehow connected to the bodies we perceive, even if they are not parts of bodies; perhaps he means here that bodies are the confused perception of a collection of monads. Note, though, that the bugs in bugs picture remains, though here it is a feature not of the real world of simple substances, but of the phenomenal world. Leibniz states this radically idealistic view even more boldly later in the same letter, in a passage I quoted earlier in this lecture:

> Indeed, considering the matter carefully it should be said that there is nothing in things except simple substances and in them perception and appetite; moreover, matter and motion are not so much substances or things as phenomena of perceivers, whose reality is situated in the harmony of perceivers with themselves (at different times) and with other perceivers. [L to de Volder, 30 June 1704, G II 270]

De Volder was deeply puzzled by this, and accused Leibniz of doing "…away with bodies altogether, in as much as you put them only in the appearances…." [de Volder to Leibniz, 14 November 1704, G II 272] Leibniz responds:

> I do not really do away with body, but restore it to what it is; for I show that corporeal mass which is believed to have something besides simple substances, is

> not a substance, but a phenomenon resulting from simple substances, which alone have unity and absolute reality. [L to de Volder, 14 November, 1704, G II 275]

But one can find even more radical conceptions of the relation between monads and bodies in the de Volder letters. In a draft of the very last letter that Leibniz sent de Volder in 1706, he wrote:

> I do not see what argument could prove that there is anything in extension, mass, or motion beyond the phenomena, that is, beyond the perceptions of simple substances. And so the active and passive force which is conceived of as a certain something in mass outside perceiving things, is nothing other than a phenomenon, like the rainbow, or an image in a mirror, or a dream, but wholly consistent with itself. And the reality of sensible things consists in nothing other than the agreement of the phenomena. [L to de Volder, January (?) 1706 (not in G)]

Here it seems as if bodies are pure phenomena, the common dream of a multitude of monads, but having no external referent or correlate at all.

Leibniz's uncertainty on the issue continues into his correspondence with Des Bosses, which begins shortly after the correspondence with de Volder begins to peter out. Bartholomaeus Des Bosses (1663-1738) was a Jesuit mathematician, more than seventeen years younger than Leibniz. Des Bosses also became the Latin translator of the *Theodicy*. In a way, these letters form a nice complement to the de Volder correspondence: de Volder was a Cartesian, while Des Bosses was a Scholastic. The correspondence extended from January 25, 1706, just as Leibniz was ending his correspondence with de Volder, until May 29 1716, just a few months before his death. [Thanks to Don Rutherford and Brandon Look for their forthcoming translation.]

The exchange begins with a letter from Des Bosses to Leibniz. The two had met in Hanover earlier in January, and spoken briefly. Des Bosses was a great admirer of Leibniz's philosophy. He was acquainted with Leibniz's philosophy, insofar as he could be through the published writings, and wanted to write a book that reconciles Aristotle, Leibniz's philosophy, and Church doctrine. [G II 293] Leibniz was obviously pleased by this, a project that fit well into his own irenic temperament, as well as promotes the diffusion of his own philosophy. Again, Leibniz was quite happy to enter into philosophical discussion with someone so enthusiastic about his thought.

The earlier letters wander over a wide variety of topics, from gossip to serious philosophical discussions. In the course of these conversational wanderings, Leibniz expresses much the same variety of views on body that he had earlier expressed to de Volder, suggesting that he hasn't really come to a stable view on the matter.

But early in 1712, something important changes. Des Bosses is then in the process of translating the *Theodicy* into Latin. In the letter of 28 Jan 1712, he proposes joining to the translation of the *Theodicy* "a certain brief specimen of a *Peripatetic Dissertation on Corporeal Substance* that I conceived a little while ago with your encouragement." [Des Bosses to L, 28 Jan 1712, G II 431] Leibniz picks up the thread immediately, as if this was an issue that had already been on his mind. He immediately responds in the very next letter, barely two weeks later, with some ideas about corporeal substance:

> I shall read with great pleasure your dissertation on corporeal substance. If corporeal substance is something real over and above monads, as a line is taken to be something over and above points, we shall have to say that corporeal substance

> consists in a certain union, or rather in a real unifier superadded to monads by God…. [L to Des Bosses, 15 February 1712, G II 435]

The question of corporeal substance then becomes a central question, indeed almost obsessively so, for the rest of the correspondence which, as I said earlier, stretches almost to the end of Leibniz's life. Interestingly enough, this part of the correspondence also takes place during the very period that he is drafting the *Monadology*.

In these later letters with Des Bosses, Leibniz is working out the question as to how a group of monads could come together to form a genuine complex substance. This squarely addresses the question I have argued that remains open at the center of the *Monadology*, the link between the world of monads and the world of bodies. Throughout these discussions Leibniz remains committed to the idea that at root, the world is made up of non-extended monads. But, at the same time, he seems very interested in figuring out how these monads ground a world in which there are genuine complex substances, and in which the world of complex extended things is more than a common dream of the monads. In other words, I claim, *Leibniz is here exploring ways of going beyond the stark idealism that he announced to de Volder, and trying to figure out ways of restoring the world as it had looked to him in the 1680s and 1690s, a world of real substantial extended things, corporeal substances, only now grounded in a world of monads.* But how can this be done?

The solution that Leibniz develops in the letters with Des Bosses is that for a group of monads to come together and form a complex corporeal substance, God would have to add a substantial bond, a *vinculum substantiale*. The doctrine is complicated, and at various moments, verges on the incoherent. But briefly, Leibniz argues for the following main theses:

(1) For there to be corporeal substance, something is needed over and above the monads.

(2) That something is itself substantial, rather than modal (that is what Des Bosses keeps on wanting).

(3) The substantial bond is distinct from the monads, and is something over and above them.

(4) Such a substantial bond will be the seat of form and matter for the complex corporeal substance, which arise from the form and matter of the individual monads.

(5) Such a substantial bond is not a soul (a monad), but exists over and above a soul in an organic body.

(6) A substantial bond can only attach to a collection of monads that constitutes an organic body.

It is important to note here that this view is clearly inconsistent with the more radically idealistic view as expressed to de Volder. On that view, all there are are monads and in them, perception and appetition. But while the view of corporeal substance that Leibniz outlines to Des Bosses still retains the level of monads, below the level of corporeal substance, it requires a real ontological commitment to something over and above the monads, indeed something over and above a collection of monads: it requires a substantial bond distinct from the monads, a real something that links them together.

In the course of the discussion of the substantial bond, Leibniz considers what the world would be like if all there were only monads, and there were no substantial bonds.

Sometimes he suggests that if we were to deny substantial bonds, bodies would be just aggregates of monads:

> You say that bodies can be something other than phenomena, even if they are not substances. I think that unless there are corporeal substances, bodies collapse into phenomena. And aggregates themselves are nothing but phenomena, since besides the ingredient monads, everything else is added through perception alone, by virtue of the fact that they are perceived at the same time. [L to Des Bosses 29 May 1716, p. 185]

Here the view seems to be that if there are no substantial bonds, then bodies would be aggregates of monads, which we unite through an operation of the mind. Add a substantial bond, though, and the situation is different: the bodies of our experience are, themselves, real, genuine things-in-themselves. But elsewhere, the suggestion is that if there were no substantial bonds, then the world of bodies would be just the coordinated dreams of an infinity of monads:

> If that substantial bond of monads were absent, then all bodies with all their qualities would be only well-founded phenomena, like a rainbow or an image in a mirror, in a word, continuous dreams that agree perfectly with each other; and in this alone would consist the reality of those phenomena. For it should no more be said that monads are parts of bodies, that they touch each other, that they compose bodies, than it is right to say this of points and souls. And a monad, like a soul, is, as it were, a certain world of its own, having no relationship of dependence except with God. Therefore, if a body is a substance, it is the realization of phenomena going beyond their agreement. [L to DB 15 Feb. 1712, G II 436 (p. 119)]

Here the view seems to be that lacking substantial bonds, the world of extended things is unreal, the coordinated dreams of a multitude of monads. (I should make a brief remark here about what Leibniz means when he talks about the "realization of phenomena" in this quotation. The Latin here is "realisatio phaenomenorum," a barbarism in Classical Latin. What he means here is that if a body is a substance, then it is a result of making the phenomena real and concrete, realization in the sense of making real.)

It isn't entirely clear just how seriously Leibniz took the substantial bond and his account of corporeal substance. Precisely because the substantial bond theory is inconsistent with the more radical idealism of the de Volder letters and with a more austere reading of the *Monadology*, commentators have been reluctant to admit that Leibniz seriously advanced it. It is widely held that Leibniz only advanced the view in order to satisfy Des Bosses, a Catholic and a Jesuit, who was concerned to be able to preserve the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. That cannot be quite right. The problem of the Eucharist in connection with corporeal substance is brought up not by Des Bosses, but by Leibniz himself. And when Leibniz brings the question up, Des Bosses is quite clear in saying that he is perfectly satisfied that the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation can be explained within the more radically idealistic conception of the world of monads; it is Leibniz who insists, against Des Bosses' protestations, that we need corporeal substances and thus the substantial bond in order to be able to explain transubstantiation. Furthermore, after a while, the discussion turns away from the theological question of the Eucharist, and toward the metaphysical question of the bond itself, what it is and how it is supposed to work. Indeed, in the beginning of the correspondence, it isn't clear just how committed Leibniz is to the view. In the beginning,

Leibniz carefully distances himself from the view: "*if* corporeal substance is something real…," "if faith drives us to corporeal substance…," "This bond, *if it exists*…." But as the correspondence proceeds, it looks more and more as if he is seriously considering it. By the last letters, he is definitely taking it seriously, and taking ownership of the doctrine: "…that substantial bond that I am urging…"; "my doctrine of composite substance…" "*my* composite substance…"

It seems clear to me that in these letters, Leibniz is worried about the reality of body, and is experimenting around with a way of reviving his earlier and more robustly realistic view. He seems willing to entertain giving up the radical idealism that he initially espoused in the letters with de Volder—and to introduce something new in nature—in order to save the reality of bodies. I think that he saw a hole in the *Monadology* that he was writing contemporaneously with these letters, and was trying to figure out how to fill that hole.

Leibniz died on November 14, 1716, a bit more than two years after he had drafted the *Monadology*, and while he was still in correspondence with Des Bosses, and still working out the idea of a substantial bond. Which is to say, his death represented an arbitrary and contingent moment when his philosophical ideas were still in flux, still growing and changing. I doubt that he would have kept the substantial bond theory that he was developing in the Des Bosses letters; in the end, I think it turns out to be simply incoherent, something that would be fairly evident if we had time to go more deeply into the texts. It is even too strong to say that Leibniz had come to the definite conclusion that there had to be corporeal substances in the world. As late as September 11 1716, just over month before he died, he wrote one correspondent that "…there is no need of extended substance…. The true substances are only simple substances or what I call 'monads.'"[3] But the relation between the world of monads and the world of bodies was something clearly on his mind, and he was clearly considering seriously what he would have to add to the world of monads to save the reality of the physical world. There is at least one essay he sketched out in his last years, perhaps even as a possible publication, in which he outlines a way of presenting the substantial bond.[4] Though it hadn't yet become one of his considered views, it may indicate that he was mulling it over, just the way he may have been mulling over idealism in the mid- and late 1690s, before he finally settled on it and went fully public with that view in the following decade.

If you interpret Leibniz as having been an idealist for his entire mature life, then it would seem implausible that at the end he would contemplate such a major revision. But if, as I have been urging, we see Leibniz as constantly growing and changing, then it isn't so far fetched to see his exchanges with Des Bosses as an indication of the direction that his thought was heading in his last years and months. Had Leibniz lived a few more years, I suspect that he would have figured out a way to smuggle corporeal substances and the full-fledged reality of the world of extended bodies back into his world, grounded now in the world of simple substances. And I suspect that within a few years, he would have abandoned the essays that he had sketched out for Eugène and Remond, the PNG and the *Monadology* and attempted a new survey of his work to replace them, one that

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[3] D III 499-500. This is quoted from the draft introduction to Rutherford and Look.

[4] See Look 1999 pp. 93-4 and Look 1998. Look has also found a set of marginal notes that Leibniz wrote in 1715-16 that discuss the substantial bond. See Look 1999 pp. 91-3.

better reflected the more realistic views of corporeal substance and body that he was contemplating at the time of his death. As I have argued with respect to the *Discourse on Metaphysics*, it is somewhat ironic that philosophers and teachers of philosophy have become so fixated on this one work as one of the keys to Leibniz's thought, the work we use to introduce students to his philosophy, the work that is probably most commented upon in his corpus. It is quite possibly only a transition into the next stage of his thought, the stage that death prevented him fully from attaining.

The Leibniz that I have been discussing in these lectures is a complicated character, constantly thinking and rethinking his position, growing and developing. Unfortunately, this Leibniz, known only to some of his closest correspondents, was virtually unknown to most of his contemporaries. When Leibniz died in 1716, relatively little of his thought was available, particularly the thought about monads, substance and body. There was the "Specimen Dynamicum" and "New System" of 1695, "On Nature Itself" of 1698, and some exchanges with Bayle that were published in the learned journals. There was, of course, the *Theodicy*, which contained important pieces of the doctrine of monads, but they were scattered throughout the book, and as Remond complained, it was difficult to get a picture of Leibniz's system of monads from that work. And there was the correspondence with Samuel Clarke, published (by Clarke) after Leibniz's death, but that contains barely a mention of the monads. A year after his death, in November 1717, Bernard de Fontenelle delivered his famous eulogy to Leibniz. There he wrote:

> In a way like the ancients who had the skill to drive up to eight horses harnessed abreast, he drove all of the sciences abreast. [2]

Fontenelle goes through a wide variety of the areas in which Leibniz made contributions, including Latin and French poetry, jurisprudence and diplomacy, history, mathematics and physics, and theology. But the world of monads gets barely a page out of the more than sixty that make up his eulogy, considerably less than his discussion of poetry and history.

The view of Leibniz changes radically just a couple of years later, when Heinrich Köhler, a student of Christian Wolff's publishes a German translation of Leibniz's *Monadology*.[5] This is followed a year later by a Latin translation, published in the *Acta eruditorum*, based on the text in Köhler's possession. (The French original wasn't to be published until the nineteenth century.) This work was immediately adopted as a central Leibnizian text. Written in clear, short paragraphs, it quickly becomes the true guide to Leibniz's philosophy, and monads become central. And it quickly becomes enshrined in various accounts of Leibniz's thought.

Perhaps most influential was Christian Wolff. Wolff had known Leibniz, and corresponded with him. Interestingly, though, Leibniz didn't think that Wolff had a particularly deep knowledge of his philosophy. In a letter to Remond, Leibniz wrote:

> M. Wolff has entered into certain of my thoughts, but since he is very busy teaching, especially mathematics, and since we haven't had much in the way of

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[5] Boehm 1957, pp. 245, 247-8 makes a plausible conjecture that Leibniz gave Köhler a late copy of the *Monadology*. Köhler is the author of the German translation published in 1720. On Köhler's connection with Wolff see p. 242. Check in Lamarra et al.

> exchanges about philosophy, he knows little about my views except for what I have published. [L to Remond, July 1714, G III 619]

And indeed, Wolff's account of Leibniz's thought about body and substance in his *Vernünfftige Gedanken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen* (1720), the so-called *German Metaphysics*, reflects the *Monadology* much more than any of the ideas we have been examining from his more private papers. (Wolff certainly knew the *Monadology* before its first publication; he had added a preface to Köhler's German edition.)[6] The *Monadology* was also prominently cited in other influential works of the period that purported to present Leibniz's philosophy. Leibniz was clearly a figure of great importance to Jacob Brucker in his monumental *Historia critica philosophiae* IV.2 (1744). The chapter on Leibniz is over 100 pages, and discusses at length his intellectual development and the larger social and political context of his thought. Brucker surveys not only his philosophical thought, but a wide variety of his other pursuits, including his work as a diplomat and historian. The essay ends with roughly forty pages summarizing Leibniz's philosophy. Far and away the longest section in this summary, more than thirty of the forty pages is the "metaphysica Leibnizii," which consists of the Latin translation of the *Monadology*, expanded with extensive commentary. (pp. 401-432) And when Madame de Châtelet, still known today for her translation of Newton's *Principia* into French, attempted to give Leibnizian foundations to Newtonian physics in her *Institutions de physique* of 1740, it was to the *Monadology* that she, too, turned. These readings of Leibniz, particularly those of Wolff and Brucker, in turn influenced the way major thinkers such as Kant and others in his generation read Leibniz. Kant, of course, was a major turning-point in the history of philosophy. How he represented earlier thinkers in his influential works had a major role to play in how later readers understood them: Kant was, in a way, and for many people still remains a filter through which we read the philosophical past. The version of Leibniz that he transmitted to later generations was the Leibniz he got from the previous generation, an idealistic Leibniz, his complex philosophy, ambiguous and constantly self-reflective, distilled into a series of short, dogmatic theses.

And so the mythological Leibniz was born. When more texts were added to the Leibnizian corpus later at the end of the eighteenth century, and even more so in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (the latest publication of an important cache of brand new texts was only five years ago), the new texts were generally read through the lens of what had already been established as the Leibnizian philosophy. And so the view of Leibniz, centered on the idealistic metaphysics of the *Monadology* perpetuated itself, and eclipsed the riches of the complex and philosophically sophisticated figure who is hidden underneath.

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[6] See Boehm 1957, p. 242.