

INTENSION, SUBSTANCE AND CALCULUS – THE LEIBNIZIAN VISION IN FRANK ANKERSMIT’S PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

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Due to the abundance of referral to the extensive work of Frank Ankersmit and my general reliance on his published books and selected papers as sources, I ask the reader to use the following list of abbreviations of some of the most featured works:

NL – Ankersmit, F. R. 1983: *Narrative Logic – a Semantic Analysis of the Historian’s Language*. Martinus Nijhoff publishers, The Hague, Netherlands.

HT – Ankersmit, F. R. 1994. *History and Tropology: The Rise and Fall of Metaphor*. University of California Press. London, England.

HR – Ankersmit, F. R. 2001: *Historical Representation*. Stanford University Press, California, USA.

PR – Ankersmit, F. R. 2002: *Political Representation*. Stanford University Press, California, USA.

SHE – Ankersmit, F. R. 2005: *Sublime Historical Experience*. Stanford University Press, California, USA.

MTR – Ankersmit F. R. 2012: *Meaning, Truth and Reference in Historical Representation*. Stanford University Press, California, USA.

HSI – Ankersmit, F. R. 2013: *History as the Science of the Individual*. *Journal of the Philosophy of History* Vol. 7 (3), 396 – 425.

WEM – Ankersmit, F. R. 2017: *Where the extremes meet*. A presently still an unpublished paper, given as the handout for Frank Ankersmit’s opening speech at the Seminar of philosophy of history in October 2017 in Oulu university.

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Introduction

Understanding Ankersmit: The Aims of my Thesis

Well, my presentation was not a success, to put it mildly. The incomprehension was near to total. Nobody had the foggiest idea of what I was talking about. I might have come from the moon or the Andromeda nebula. As was to be expected, the main obstacle to a meaningful discussion was my claim that historical representations are not determined by anything outside themselves – a claim which is, of course, in agreement with Leibniz’s theory of the substance.¹

I find the anecdote above intriguing in two ways. Firstly, it immediately reveals the divergent character of Ankersmit’s philosophy of history. At first encounter, one cannot help but wonder what he might mean by claiming that (historical) representations are not defined by anything outside themselves? Secondly, another source of puzzlement will be most likely be Leibniz’s appearance. What does Leibniz’s substance theory have to do with historical representation, or philosophy of history in general? As Marek Tamm and Eugen Zelenák have recently put it, Ankersmit is arguably the greatest living philosopher of history of today. Yet, the reverence he enjoys is accompanied by controversy.² The aim of this paper is to help resolve some of that controversy by exploring and explaining the Leibniz’s ideas as they appear in Ankersmit’s philosophy. Ankersmit sees in philosophy of history three distinctive categories, also identified roughly in the same way earlier by Tamm and Zelenák.

1. By *Historical research* Ankersmit refers to the work historians do in analysing evidence of the past. This happens in a variety of methods ranging from interviews to discourse analysis of texts. These methods of analysis provide us with reliable facts about past events and will necessarily form a significant part of the historian’s work. Here theory and more generally, epistemology, is useful. Any logical approach to language may be applied here, as long as it helps establish facts³.
2. With *Historical representation* he refers to the process of history-writing. Such a process is not a simple putting together of these fact in an attempt to describe the past. Rather, it should be thought of in the narrativist way as a synthetic process of putting together a representation. In this process, unlike in that of *historical research*,

¹ *Leibnizian Philosophy of History: A Conversation*. Ankersmit & Tamm, p. 499.

² Tamm & Zelenák, 326.

³ Let us not problematise the term “historical fact” here, as Ankersmit has never done so. If we question simple statements such as “Caesar crossed the Rubicon”, historiography will become a no-go.

epistemology is useless, and aesthetic criteria are applied. Historical representation necessarily takes place in the framework of a representationalist logic, in which one treats a whole text as the basic semantic unit.⁴

3. Finally, there is *historical experience*, which Tamm and Zeleňák identify as Ankersmit's "ontology" of history. Best expressed in *Sublime Historical Experience*, historical experience is a proposal for how historians actually come into contact with a past that does not exist anymore.

For those unfamiliar with Ankersmit's work. A large section in this introduction will be dedicated for explaining the basics of many of Ankersmit's central philosophical concepts. Additionally, in the chapters themselves, further elaboration will be provided where necessary, though therein my focus will be in fleshing out the what is *Leibnizian* about these very concepts. With Leibnizianism I refer in the context of this paper to Ankersmit as someone who analogically applies aspects of Leibniz's philosophy. These aspects are parallel to the tripartite division that was just made about Ankersmit's own work.

As we will see, G. W. Leibniz was a precursor on many areas of scholarship. For the purposes of this paper, his metaphysics in its two primary forms, his ideas about mathematical function and calculus, and his projects for the development of a universal language are at centre stage. In approaching Leibniz's theory of substance, I follow scholars such as Daniel Garber and Glenn Hartz, who have claimed that Leibniz meant to propose two theories of substance simultaneously in the *Monadology* and the theory of corporeal substances⁵. I will argue that both are, in a sense, included in Ankersmit's philosophy. The theory of corporeal substances in historical research, which is recognised but virtually left untouched by Ankersmit. The *Monadology* can also be found both his theories of historical experience, where it is mostly implicit, and historical representation, where the analogy between historical representation and the monad is explicitly drawn. I will also propose that Leibniz's ideas about mathematics – the notion of function and infinitesimal calculus – are present in Ankersmit. Function due to Ankersmit's interpretation of the *Monadology* that the monad may be thought of as a such.

⁴ The distinction between historical research and history-writing is made in all of Ankersmit's book that touch upon the notion of historical representation. See e.g. NL, 8; HR, 52 – 54; MTR, 60.

⁵ Garber, Daniel 2009: *Leibniz: Body, Substance, Monad*. Oxford University Press. UK. Hartz, Glen 1998: *Why corporeal substances keep popping up in Leibniz's later philosophy*. *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 6 (2) 193 – 207.

And the calculus because it is useful in explaining how historical writing commences, through what Ankersmit called his “scope criterion” in *Narrative Logic* and because it is useful in explaining, among other means, what historical reality is for him in philosophy of history. Calculus is parallel to the aesthetic criteria that guide a historian in picking the right order and amount of statements in a narrative. Leibniz’s project on universal language is a more troublesome affair. It on the other hand is constructed on the same principles that help define the *Monadology* and is based on the notion of complete concepts that may be analysed into primitive ones. While Ankersmit’s historical representations are analogous to complete concepts, they are never broken apart in analysis. This is allowed in epistemology but not in representation. Therefore, the *characteristica universalis* may be seen as contributing to the theory of representation, while mostly falling into the domain of historical research. Both substance and function are given whole chapters in order to fully explain their application in Ankersmit’s philosophy, while Leibniz’s intensional logic will be explained at the end of chapter I.

This thesis will then evolve around these complex subjects and their interrelatedness with the aim of answering the wholesome and most troublesome question: *What exactly is Frank Ankersmit’s Leibnizian vision and what is the extent of this vision?* This question is worth answering because of the general bewilderment associated with Ankersmit’s philosophy and referred to already by Ankersmit himself in the citation I began with. My point of departure is to take Ankersmit’s word on both his Leibnizianism and the confessed aims of his philosophy. His mission has always been to explain *what history is* and thereafter provide for philosophers of history an apriorist system within which rational debate may commence regardless of the paradigms of the debaters⁶. His philosophy draws from various sources, of which historicism and Leibniz are the most important ones⁷. I will only define historicism more articulately later on but hasten to note that Leibniz has been an influence on historicist thought much before Ankersmit entered the picture⁸. Therefore, I have incorporated into this paper many interpretations of historicist philosophers, of which Ernst Cassirer is foremost.

⁶ WEM, 4 – 5.

⁷ On Ankersmit’s commitment to historicism: Ankersmit 2003: *Invitation to Historians*, 3; Ankersmit 2010: *The Necessity of Historicism*, 23.

⁸ See for example den Hollander, Jaap 2010: *Beyond Historicism: From Leibniz to Luhmann*. *Journal of the Philosophy of History* 4 210 – 225.

While I may have over-pronounced his importance to Ankersmit, I find his philosophy of symbolic forms and interpretation of Leibniz's metaphysics invaluable for my own analysis of Ankersmit's Leibnizianism. Cassirer's *Essay on Man* and his 1910 book, *Substance and Function*, are commonly referred in this paper.

Now, as I mentioned, Ankersmit wants to explain what history is and through this help genuine debate in philosophy of *history* take place. His problem with contemporary philosophy of history is that it, as he sees it, almost exclusively takes interest in epistemological questions concerning the problems of how we can describe the past and find out the truth about the past. A project that is insufficient in accounting for how the past becomes meaningful for us through the writing of history⁹. More recently he has reformulated the problem by stating that philosophers prevent themselves from making a clear distinction between historical research and historical writing¹⁰. This problem is seen by him to follow from the Quine-Duhem thesis of theory-ladenness, which results in an anti-foundationalist philosophy of science, though not necessarily of history¹¹. In a footnote in MTR, he writes: "I am convinced that the belief in the perfect continuity between historical research and historical writing is a myth inspired by the thesis of the theory-ladenness of empirical fact"¹². If philosophy of history is to be taken seriously as an independent discipline, it must accept representation as its point of departure and deny such continuity.

With this, Ankersmit is also defying the criticisms he has received, which position his ideas within postmodernism by seeing in him someone, who denies that history is about truth¹³. Whether there is weight in these accusations, depends on one's definition of postmodernism, a theme we will visit in chapter III of this paper. Ankersmit's account is that those making this accusation are then falling victims to the illusion of what he has called "narrative realism" or either themselves denying the connection history has with the past¹⁴. The question is seen in a new light via Leibniz. In SHE, Ankersmit re-stated his views on the status of philosophy of

⁹ NL, 13 – 14; HT, 3 – 4.

¹⁰ MTR, 60 – 61.

¹¹ WEM, 4 – 5. Quine-Duhem thesis.

¹² MTR, 60f.

¹³ There are numerous such critiques, many of which will be referred to in this paper. See e.g. Stanford 1998; Zagorin 1990; Zammito 1998, 2005.

¹⁴ I will explain the distinction between Ankersmit's notions of "narrative realism" and "narrative idealism" shortly.

history in yet another way. In reflection of his philosophy of historical experience, he sees contemporary historical theory as:

---an almost endless series of transcendentalist monstrosities, each of them even more difficult to grasp and more ambitious than its competitors, and that these monstrosities did, in fact, little more than to perversely draw attention to themselves instead of opening our eyes to the sublime mysteries of the past¹⁵.

The problem here is, for him, that it is precisely theory that insulates the historian from the past.

A confusing thing about Ankersmit is that it is sometimes unclear whether he is referring to history or philosophy of history in his work. Generally, and somewhat surprisingly, he states that he had very little to say to historians. In NL, he argues that all his work, as a description of the historian's work in regard to *history-writing*, can do for the historian is state the goal of historiography but never any instruction in how to achieve this¹⁶. In a 2005 interview he said that "I have no pretension to change the historical discipline. If I have any revolutionary pretensions (in spite of my rather conservative turn of mind), then these are for philosophy only"¹⁷. Where you'd expect a definition, the Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy gives you several and afterwards states the following about philosophy of history:

---it is impossible to give one definition of the field that suits all these approaches. In fact, it is misleading to imagine that we refer to a single philosophical tradition when we invoke the phrase, "philosophy of history," because the strands of research characterized here rarely engage in dialogue with each other.¹⁸

This is a state Ankersmit claims to be attempting to remedy. He argues that philosophy of history currently has no way of determining which theory is best. All historical theorist are doing in his mind, is present their views and argue against those of others with no "urgency" in attempting to genuinely reflect the work of others and renew one's own. He insists on genuine debate, referring to representations of scholars' ideas. Not arguments occurring in conferences, where he thinks little progress is made.¹⁹

With the logic of historical representation his aim is to provide an apriorist foundation for debate so that philosophers can break through their subdisciplinary boundaries and here is

¹⁵ SHE, 105.

¹⁶ NL, 205.

¹⁷ Moskalewicz, 256.

¹⁸ Little, *Philosophy of History*. Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy.

¹⁹ Invitation to Historians, 433.

where Leibniz's metaphysics provides a model²⁰. Many secondary aims are also explicitly stated in his work. Historical experience is an account of the subjective and the sublime and how the past becomes present for us through experience. Also, for example, on his list is defence of political representation against theory-laden forms of policy-making²¹. In retrospect to this Leibnizian analysis of Ankersmit's work, we will be able to evaluate the success of some of these projects in the conclusions section.

Ankersmit has little to say to historians themselves, because he states that history as a discipline has an uncanny resistance to historical theory²². Where he does approach historians is when it comes down to *historical experience*. He laments that modern historians shy away from their personal experience about history:

I would not know of any contemporary historian who still has the pretension to provide us with such a map for our collective future; the attempt to do so would be considered a ridiculous overestimation of the historian's cultural assignment and, even worse, as an abnegation of the historian's duties towards the cause of objectivity and of scientific truth.²³

Only historical experience can provide the past with meaning. *Historical Representation*, Ankersmit's 2001 book, begins essentially with the same message. He writes of a "golden age" of historical thought, when historians boldly projected meanings to the past, stimulating public about the human condition. While he speaks of history, he refers to "Braudels, Foucaults, Arieses, Fogels, Ginzburgs or Hayden Whites".²⁴ His wish is that history as a discipline adopt bold thesis as it's primary guideline and in this I believe his agenda is similar to that put forth by in the quite recent *The History Manifesto* by Jo Guldi and David Armitage, who call out for *la longue duree* history²⁵. So like Leibniz, Ankersmit has put together a philosophy that is deceptively simple and yet incredibly ambitious. He commit's to Leibniz's work because he wants to do what Leibniz wanted to do. Provide a framework within which it is possible to It is unfortunate that I am unable to provide that this framework, though most readers of this work probably have some idea about it. The explanation, however, must wait until the conclusions.

²⁰ WEM, 1.

²¹ Ankersmit 2002: *Political Representation*.

²² Moskalewicz, 256.

²³ Invitation to Historians, 417.

²⁴ HR, 2 – 4.

²⁵ Guldi, Jo & Armitage, David 2014: *The History Manifesto*.

Recently some interest has been directed towards Leibniz's appearance in Ankersmit's ideas by scholars in philosophy of history. Most notably, Daniel Fairbrother has written papers already addressing Ankersmit's Leibnizianism, two of them directly reflecting his views and their Leibnizian inspirations²⁶. He has defended Ankersmit's representational logic against Jouni-Matti Kuukkanen's attack on it by identifying its reliance on Leibniz's metaphysics²⁷. Relying of Daniel Garber's interpretation of the development of Leibniz's substance theory to make an interpretation that Ankersmit applies only a small part of Leibniz's philosophy in the *Monadology* and limited use of Leibniz's so-called *predicate -in-notion* -principle. He has also questioned the applicability of Ankersmit's work for historians.²⁸ This paper's aim is to show that this accusation misses its target and that Leibniz indeed is present in Ankersmit's writings in various ways.

Jouni-Matti Kuukkanen recently also wrote a text on Ankersmit's rationality, in which Leibniz is taken into account concerning the pragmatic aspects of Ankersmit's theory, or how Leibniz becomes a part of Ankersmit's rationalism, which usually is defined in the terms of aesthetics²⁹. Kuukkanen makes what I believe to be a correct interpretation of Ankersmit's notion of how representational logic is applied by application of the Leibnizian notion of calculus. While significant part of this work, I do not believe I can add much there, other than establish better the connection calculus has with Leibniz's metaphysics. The problem in general is that while Ankersmit has been praised, criticised and reviewed from the point of view of numerous scholarly paradigms from analytic philosophy of language to gender studies, I do not think anyone has considered him at face value as a *thoroughly* "Leibnizian" philosopher. In the conversation with Tamm, he states: "The funny thing is that though my theory of history is Leibnizian through and through, no one ever paid any attention to this aspect of it"³⁰. As said, this characterises my approach and hopefully this paper will provide people with an extended and accessible understanding of Ankersmit's philosophy.

²⁶ Fairbrother 2017, 2018a, 2018b.

²⁷ Fairbrother 2017.

²⁸ Fairbrother 2018a, 17 – 18. He writes: "If Ankersmit wishes to maintain a robust connection with Leibniz' broader philosophy, rather than just borrowing the formal apparatus of the Complete Individual Concept---"

²⁹ Kuukkanen, 2018.

³⁰ *Leibnizian Philosophy of History: A Conversation*. Ankersmit & Tamm, p. 499.

I answer my research-question by analysing Ankersmit's philosophy through the concepts I have provided in the title: 1) *Intension*. With this term I refer to the knowledge contained in a concept that is equal to the combination of all the more primitive concepts contained within³¹. For Leibniz, propositions are identities and they are true if the predicate is contained in the subject. As a nominalist, Leibniz did not accept universals, but reality was composed for him of individual things that are defined in thought only in complete concepts fully corresponding to them³². Raili Kauppi called Leibniz's logic an intensional one because of these notions. Concepts are expressions of things in it and all one needs to do ... stands for Ankersmit's commitment to the idea that whole texts in history must be treated as complete concepts in the Leibnizian sense. This means that whole texts are treated as *individuals*, that can only be referred to, by addressing every one of the statements contained in the text.

2) *Substance*, the largest and arguably most counterintuitive aspect here, stands for Ankersmit's theory of representation, which is inspired by Leibniz's idealistic metaphysics. Ankersmit applies the perceptive nature of the Leibnizian monad to argue for historical texts as "points-of-view" to the past. These points of view are experienced. Just as some monads are conscious, so is the historian's experience of what the past is like. The text is a substitute of this vision of the past. Ernst Cassirer noted, that the notion of mathematical function became an integral part of Leibniz's theory of substance³³. Ankersmit seems to follow this interpretation of the monadology in his theory of *historical experience*.

3) *Calculus* represents the sublime process the historian goes through in his search for the best of possible historical account. Historians seek maximal explanatory power combined with a compact text which is supported by ample facts. This abstract idea carries over from the analogy he draws between Leibniz's notion of God and the historian, both of whom seek the best in creation. The calculus also explains historical reality, which for Ankersmit is not the external reality of previous times per se, but rather the reality we create in our representations of the past, which are ideally preserved for all time. Historical reality is the

³¹ Ariew & Garber, 24. See also Adams, 78 – 79. In Adams' book, the term "conceptual containment theory" is used to describe Leibniz's account for what truth is.

³² Mates, chapter x.

³³ See, for example, den Hollander, 212. Cassirer for one saw in Leibniz's substance the equivalent of mathematical function.

context of historical debate, and it is in debate we decide what representation is best, and define the meaning of parts of the past.

In chapter I I introduce Leibniz's metaphysics and his ideas about language and argue that both are found in Ankersmit's work. My interpretation of Leibniz will follow somewhat from my own reading of his texts but mostly from those put forth in recent Leibniz-scholarship. Another theme is the identification of Ankersmit as a historicist and the suggestion that since Leibniz was an inspiration to many historicist thinkers, Ankersmit follows an older creed that he has attempted to reform with his work. This reforming leads to Leibniz's idealistic metaphysics in its representationalism becoming the new model for what *history-writing* is about. The end of chapter 1 will deal with the intensionality of historical language/representation in Ankersmit's work and examine it from a Leibnizian perspective. When historical texts are thought of as complete concepts in the Leibnizian sense, why is it necessary to insist on the existence of a semantic gap between statements in the text and the whole text? An answer will be provided by illuminating how texts and statements follow different logics similarly to how Leibniz's substance theory has two seemingly contradictory, but ultimately reconcilable incarnations. One featuring a subject and object, another disposing of them, at least arguably.

The distinction between these theories is fully made only in chapter II, where the far-reaching Leibnizian vision of Frank Ankersmit is revealed to be not only about intensional meaning, but also about experience, as Ankersmit interprets this notion to appear in Leibniz's idealistic substance-theory. Chapter II therefore contains my explanation for how Leibniz's idea of substance is applied by Ankersmit to account for the conscious experiences of historians that write these texts and how these experiences are represented in historical texts as unities. Ankersmit draws an analogy between Leibniz's monad and that which is represented in historical texts – both are points of view to reality. Epistemology is of no use here, Ankersmit says, because such a represented is not constructed logically, but is experienced. I.e. it is not part of the phenomenal and objective, but the noumenal and subjective. The latter part of the chapter moves on to how Leibniz can help Ankersmit in explaining the ramifications of his proposed representationalist logic.

It's appliance, or perhaps, lack of it, will be explained in chapter III, where explain the two applications of calculus in Ankersmit's theory and also explain how the notions of aesthetics

and metaphor relate to this. Finally, I will take a look at some of Ankersmit's critics and see how Leibniz helps him provide arguments against them.

About Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz crafted his philosophy from many influences. Formally he was educated as a scholastic, but he refused academic positions to not get anchored down for he wished to be able expand his knowledge and influence the scholarly world, which was moving beyond the reach of scholasticism³⁴. As a child, Leibniz was a nuisance to many of his teachers, for he had also begun *his own* education at his father's library and, understanding Latin at a young age read classic works, and often challenged the people that were supposed to be his intellectual superiors³⁵. His approach to scholastic teachings was unorthodox and he criticised contemporary interpretations of classic philosophy such as Aristotle's works. Nevertheless, he retained many aspects of scholasticism in his philosophy and perhaps most importantly emphasized Aristotelian individuality in his approach to substance theory³⁶. But scholasticism was not enough. In the 17th century, Paris and to an extent the royal academy in Britain were the leading scholarly centres of Europe wherein discoveries in mathematics and natural sciences were being made and philosophy – not quite distinguishable from science at this time – was accommodating quickly to this unprecedented progress. A new kind of mathematical vision of the universe was emerging and this was evident in the rising popularity of geometrical demonstration in philosophy³⁷. Something Leibniz took very seriously. Leibniz had to adapt to the “moderns”, and he did so by compromising between scholasticism and the mechanistic philosophy put forth by Cartesians and the likes of Thomas Hobbes.

³⁴ Antognazza, 66. When offered a professorship in Altdorf university, Leibniz declined due to “ardent desire to earn more glory in the sciences”. As Nicholas Jolley recounts in the introduction he wrote to the *Cambridge companion to Leibniz*, at this time the function of scholastically oriented universities was to uphold current doctrines rather than to advance new ones. Scholasticism in this paper

³⁵ Antognazza, 30 – 32.

³⁶ Generally, for scholastic philosophers as for Aristotle, an individual object (e.g. a person) is a primary substance because he/she cannot be predicated further onto anything else. Secondary substances or concepts can be predicated to primary substances. For a neat general presentation on Aristotelian substance see Robinson 2018, section 2.2.

³⁷ Spinoza's *Ethics* is a good example of this sort of metaphysics centred on demonstration by setting rigid axioms and definitions and explaining everything from them. Cartesian did this too and Leibniz expressed that this was the proper way, though he felt that usually it only served to alienate readers. See Jolley, *Metaphysics in The Cambridge Companion to Early Modern Philosophy*.

Though educated as a scholastic and being influenced by mechanistic philosophy, categorising Leibniz into philosophical traditions is difficult. The oeuvre of this prolific writer is both immensely wide and uncannily fragmentary and aside from his *Théodicée*, his logical proof for the existence and goodness of God, he never left behind a grand work that could be referred to as his official view³⁸. Leibniz's metaphysics is at the heart of this work and that of Ankersmit's. Therefore, it is unfortunate that there exists no consensus on Leibniz's final views about his ontological meditations. In his metaphysics Leibniz is often described an idealist. A notion based on the strikingly coherent solution, which Leibniz offered in his unpublished paper called the *Monadology*, to the problem of what there fundamentally is in reality³⁹. Competing views present him as a theory pluralist, someone not willing to fully commit to any one theory concerning metaphysics⁴⁰. Some have even claimed he was always committed to a theory of substance not defined in the idealistic terms of the *Monadology*⁴¹.

The *Monadology* is of prime importance in this paper, due to it being a central inspiration for Frank Ankersmit's philosophy of history. It was written by Leibniz at the request of a Parisian courtier and scholar Nicolas Rémond and Prince Eugene of Savoy, both wishing to understand Leibniz's latest views on metaphysics better. Leibniz answered these requests with two texts written roughly simultaneously: *The Principles of Nature and Grace* and *The Principles of Philosophy (the Monadology)*. The first one is a condensation of his philosophical views and it is generally agreed to be the more easily comprehensible of the two texts. In it, substance is presented as both simple and aggregated, whereas in the *Monadology*, the only true substances are simple ones⁴². Leibniz suppressed the *Monadology*, however, and sent the *Principles of Nature and Grace* to his intended audiences and this text was subsequently also published four years later unlike the *Monadology* which had to wait until 1840. Maria Antognazza suggests as the most probable explanations for this is that Leibniz felt the public

³⁸ Mates, 6 – 7. Unpublished writings as the basis of inquiry require an extra layer of interpretational care. In Garber 2009, the author convincingly presents Leibniz as a philosophical explorer, who often experimented with ideas in his letters and essays, out of which only a fraction was ever published. John Whipple has researched the esotericism and exotericism of Leibniz's writings, presenting him as someone, who never failed to contemplate matters of chosen terminology and style for his texts and their intended readers.

³⁹ Adams, 1994, Rutherford 1995, Wilson 1989.

⁴⁰ See Hartz, 1998. Garber, 2009.

⁴¹ Daniel Garber describes Pauline Phemister's 2005 book *Leibniz and the Natural World* as such an account. See Garber, 386 – 387. I was not able to get hold of the book myself.

⁴² Ariew & Garber, 207. Theorem 3 in *The Principles* explicitly describes for example animals as aggregates of infinite monads, the unity of which belongs to a single monad that is the central one. This makes up a corporeal substance.

was not ready for his more advanced views or that he was genuinely still undecided about the question whether aggregates should count as substances.⁴³ Having to be cautious of his way of addressing new audiences was a common obstacle for Leibniz. This point is well addressed by John Whipple in his article *Leibniz's Exoteric Philosophy*, where a distinction is made between Leibniz's philosophically uncompromising "exoteric" texts, and "esoteric" ones that were written for specific audiences with terminological consideration.⁴⁴ That is, e.g. that scholastic terminology was used to address scholastics and cartesian terms in the case of cartesian readers. It is also important to remember that Leibniz continuously wrote not only to philosophers, but to laymen and nobles of differing backgrounds as well.

I find it fitting to describe the theory of corporeal substances described in *The Principles of Nature and Grace* Leibniz's best formulation of the *phenomenal* universe, while the *Monadology* represents an attempt to explain what it is *nominally* or *representationally*. According to §14 - 17 it is the case that the monad *is* perception. The *Monadology* forbids intermonadic causation, preserving the sanctity of perception and consciousness, which cannot be reduced to something that is aggregated. Leibniz could not accept the idea that monads affect one another, because this would compromise the monads role as a *subject* of change and meant that the subjective perceptions of individuals could cause the subjective perceptions other individuals. While the same terminology (substance) is applied in these texts, they would in fact be theories about different matters.

Concerning Leibniz's ideas about language and concepts: Despite the scholasticist-Aristorelian foundation of his metaphysics, Leibniz could nevertheless be described as a Platonist when it comes to the question of inherent ideas and his debate with Locke, who entertained the idea – abhorrent to Leibniz – of "thinking matter"⁴⁵. Leibniz was a committed nominalist just like the materialistically inclined Thomas Hobbes, whom Leibniz read as a young man. But unlike the English philosopher, he maintained, that ideas or concepts were *not subjective*⁴⁶. Though nominalism implies that he denied universals exist, he nevertheless took it for granted that things could be identified as they really are through proper reasoning.

⁴³ Antognazza, 500 – 502. Antognazza provides an account of what was requested of Leibniz and of how the two texts came exist in Leibniz's attempt to answer these requests.

⁴⁴ See *Leibniz's Exoteric Philosophy*. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

⁴⁵ Look, section 6.3. Explicitly in Leibniz's *New Essays on Human Understanding* p.48.

⁴⁶ Leibniz's nominalism is discussed thoroughly in Mates, p. 171 – 183.

i.e. by defining things with their correspondent concepts. The twist is that for Leibniz, concepts are not to be thought of as universal things, but as *dispositions to think about things*⁴⁷. This idea about concepts is at the core of his pursuit for the *characteristica universalis*. A project Leibniz never managed to even partially complete despite numerous attempts⁴⁸.

Three of Leibniz's intellectual ambitions are worth focussing on for the purposes of my thesis⁴⁹. They represent what I interpret as different commitments Ankersmit makes to Leibniz's philosophy. Firstly, Leibniz's metaphysics, in two of its incarnations. The scholastically driven theory of substantial forms that was the basis of Leibniz's ideal about corporeal substance, and the idealistic monadology Leibniz is famous for. Secondly, aside from philosophy, Leibniz had also a keen interest in mathematics and he is remembered as one of the inventors of calculus, alongside Isaac Newton⁵⁰. This discovery would affect Leibniz's thinking dramatically and as Ernst Cassirer suggested, transformed his metaphysics into the system given in the Monadology. Thirdly, ever since his first published writings, Leibniz expressed interest in a project attempted already by his time by many logicians of fame, namely a universal logical language. This already mentioned *characteristica universalis* was in Leibniz's vision at the same time a tool for communication, logical reasoning and discovery⁵¹.

⁴⁷ Mates, 175.

⁴⁸ For narratives on the development of Leibniz universal language and logical calculus see Donald Rutherford, *Philosophy and Language in Leibniz*; Mates, chapter X; or Antognazza's biography of Leibniz where the *characteristica universalis* is a central theme throughout.

⁴⁹ Leibniz's other projects included calculating machines and other feats of engineering, diplomatic endeavours of a grand scale, history-writing and theological proofs only to name a few.

⁵⁰ It's not suggested that they worked together. The opposite is true as this matter became one of controversy since the Royal Academy attempted to discredit Leibniz by accusing his of having stolen Newtons methods and conclusions. Antognazza, 166 – 167.

⁵¹ Not to be confused with constructed languages like *Esperanto*, the proposed universal characteristic would presumably encyclopaedically break concepts down to their primitive constituents, to which symbols or numbers would be assigned. Everything that could be expressed or reasoned could be done rigorously with these symbols and their combinations. For description of Leibniz's efforts on the project, see Rutherford 1994 or Peckhaus. Some of the attempts Leibniz made on this front are documented in Ariew & Garber p. 5 – 19.

The Outline of Ankersmit's Philosophy of History⁵²

During a span of nearly four decades Frank Ankersmit has written several influential books on philosophy. The extent of my project is such that it makes sense to try and flesh out some of the intellectual background he comes from and bring up the most central themes in his work concerning philosophy of history. Ever since his first publications, two prominent influences can be seen in historicism and the philosophy of G. W. Leibniz. Though other influences are present in his work on philosophy of historiography, such as W. H. Walsh's theory on historical colligation and Arthur Danto's views about historiography as metaphorical representation of past subjects; historicism and Leibniz provide the foundation and are also linked to one another in several circumstances preceding Frank Ankersmit.

A Logic in Narrativism and Historicism

The position of history as an independent academic discipline is heritage from historicism. All historians have heard of Leopold von Ranke, who is often looked upon as the founding father of modern academic history. Ranke promoted a rigorous methodological approach to historical research so that only proper sources could be used in a historian's work and these sources are treated with properly critical attention⁵³. At the foundation of historicism is the idea that a thing is defined by its history. Ankersmit has often expressed his alignment to this basic tenet of historicism⁵⁴. I will explore historicism and its connections with Leibniz further in chapter 1. However, when it comes to theses made in historical accounts, he has openly supported the narrativist view.

In 1973 Hayden White's book, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-century Europe*, was published, and in it a theory was presented that treated historical texts not as a scientific theorising about the past, but instead as "emplotted" literary artefacts merely *based on* historical research⁵⁵. Stories, to put it in more mundane language. The essential thing is

⁵² It is recommended for advanced readers of Ankersmit to move on to chapter I, though it may be worthwhile to skim through in order to get an idea of *how I have interpreted* Ankersmit's corpus.

⁵³ For an account on historicism see e.g. Iggers, Georg 2005: *Historiography in the Twentieth Century*.

⁵⁴ NL, 8; HSI, 421; MTR, ix.

⁵⁵ Doran, 106 – 107. Emplotment refers to the conscious or unconscious process of infusing an ethical or political agenda into the narrative of a historiography using one of a set of literary tropes. Therefore, in White's approach there are always motives behind a historical narrative, be they conscious or not.

that such a story is not a “true story” in the conventional sense. It is a colligated whole made up of historical facts that expresses a political or some other motif using a chosen style to transmit the message in a fashion of the writers devising. White’s theory of literary tropes in the writing of history, and the arguments he made were effective in changing people’s views about the discipline of history as a scientific endeavour. A narrativist take on history is generally to see it more akin to literature than science. White’s theory was a challenge to the discipline of history⁵⁶, in which empirical methodology was and is commonly applied in Rankean fashion in an attempt to discover *the truth* about the past. In what is now often called the “linguistic turn” in historical theory, narrativism called to question this kind of objectivity of historiography and the wisdom of adherence to optimistic approaches such as logical positivism in the discipline⁵⁷. As Michael Stanford put it: “What we know and how we know it began to give way to questions of what we tell and how we tell it”⁵⁸. Not a pleasing situation for those who viewed history as a scientific endeavour.

While I do not wish to claim that White had *no* interest in history beyond treating it as pure literary exercise, this was common criticism against him. A decade or so after *Metahistory*, Frank Ankersmit attempted to up the ante by presenting a new theory⁵⁹. A logic he felt could, firstly, show that historiographical texts are distinct from other products of science (be they natural- or social-), and secondly to expound exactly what makes them different. This meant the redefining of several epistemological key notions such as “truth” and “representation”. Though his first published book had a poor reception and did not catch the attention of wider audiences, it already contained the basics of Ankersmit’s theory of representation such as they are today⁶⁰. One important aspect Ankersmit thought Hayden White had ignored – because he primarily wrote as a literary theorist – is the relationship that historical texts are

⁵⁶ Or philosophy of history / philosophy of historiography.

⁵⁷ See chapter 2 in Jouni-Matti Kuukkanen’s book *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*. Since the early 20th century, logical positivism was an influential philosophical movement, that heralded science as the only and ultimate tool for describing reality. Tenets such as verificationism and empiricism were expounded. Even in the discipline of academic history some philosophers thought that it was possible to formulate general laws similarly to other sciences by carefully observing past events and establishing rules and laws. C. G. Hempel proposed that similarly to other sciences, certain covering laws can be proposed meaningfully in history and even that predictions could thus be made about the future. Also see Berry, 165 – 166; Kosso, 23.

⁵⁸ Stanford, 229.

⁵⁹ The book was not well received, and Ankersmit’s theory became more widely known only through later work. For Ankersmit’s reflection on its release, see for example, Jonathan Menezes’ *The limits of the ‘autumn of historiography’: On Frank Ankersmit’s postmodernist moment*, p. 2 – 3.

⁶⁰ Menezes, 3.

expected to have with the past. Surely there must be one, since a historian claims to study the past. Ankersmit admits that White's contributions are revolutionary considering the "linguistic turn" in history. Specifically, he implies that thanks to White we began to better comprehend that the historian's language has great impact on how we understand the past. However, Ankersmit himself stands strictly inside the boundaries of philosophy history and he proceeds where he felt historicism failed. His theory denies that historiography describes the past, just as narrativism does, and yet he attempts to establish how the historian's language relates to past reality.⁶¹ This task was first taken up extensively in Ankersmit's doctoral dissertation of 1981, *Narrative Logic – A Semantic Analysis of a Historian's Language*, though – as we shall see – it becomes clearer only in later publications⁶². Briefly the answer has two components. Firstly, he has never denied that facts are a necessary requirement for historiography. Secondly, though this is a later idea not present in NL, the past, as something that is actual, is a creation of the historian's mind. Or rather it becomes the historian's mind.

As stated, Ankersmit's work spans four decades of philosophy of history and so it is no surprise that terminologically there are shifts and turns in his writings. Also, his reference to Leibniz has since *Narrative Logic* been fickle⁶³. While occasional references are made⁶⁴, Leibniz has only lately returned in force to Ankersmit texts⁶⁵. However, it is important to note that his theory of historical representation, though refined, remains mostly undisturbed throughout this time. The most notable change being that the words *representation* and *represented* have taken precedence over the term *narrative substance* in his vocabulary⁶⁶. A comparison of what Ankersmit says about the narrative logic in NL, chapters V and VI⁶⁷ and his essay *Representationalist Logic* (2014) in Admir Sdodo's *Other Logics*, p. 104 – 108, one will see that virtually the same arguments are made in both texts, though terminology has shifted. Jonathan Menezes refers to an interview given by Ankersmit to Ewa Domanska in 1998, suggesting that Ankersmit purposefully adopted new vocabulary from American philosophy

⁶¹ HR; 29 – 30, 63 – 65.

⁶² The notion of *historical experience*

⁶³ In NL, Leibniz's philosophy is given a thorough treatment in the beginning of chapter VI. Also, theorems of the *Monadology* are explicitly evoked in his introduction of narrative substances on p. 94.

⁶⁴ See e.g. *Political Representation* p. 227; HR, p. 212. *Invitation to Historians*, *Rethinking History* 7:3 (2003), p. 413 – 437.

⁶⁵ *History as the Science of the Individual; Where the extremes meet*.

⁶⁶ A change that does not jeopardise the "leibnizianism" of Ankersmit's work since representation and substance are essentially the same thing in the *Monadology*.

⁶⁷ See e. g. pages 95, 109 – 110. (Narrative logic and narrative universe)

of language and French post-structuralism so as to achieve a more ‘radical’ tone in his work⁶⁸. Ankersmit’s reading of Richard Rorty made him realise how similar their ideas were concerning language, theory and reality, and this was partly the reason for adopting a new terminological approach⁶⁹. In SHE, Ankersmit implies that it was Arthur Danto’s work on historical representation that set him up on the road towards a shift in his thought from narrative to representation⁷⁰. What is noteworthy is that he believes Leibniz is the “greatest philosopher of representation in all of the history of philosophy”⁷¹. This is no coincidence. I will use the different terms in Ankersmit’s work interchangeably. With narrative substance being divided up to the terms *representation* and *represented* Ankersmit has made it easier to understand his philosophy as a two-way road between historical experience and historical representations. Representation makes it also easier to explain that not just texts are historical representations.

Historical Research & Historical Text

A core element in Ankersmit’s theory of historical representation is what Jouni-Matti Kuukkanen has aptly dubbed the *narrativist insight*. The concept expresses a common notion that to get to the thesis presented by a historian on a subject, one must read her book from cover to cover⁷². Narrativism, a modern paradigm to historiography to which the early Ankersmit aligned himself, proposes that in historiography the whole text is semantically greater than the sum of its parts. A historical writing is more than a simple set of statements.⁷³ This suggests that there is some logical function at work when propositions are brought together in a text. One perhaps explained by expanding the focus of traditional logical inquiry beyond the proposition. Ankersmit thinks that this is an oversimplification.

His approach to the problem is different. As said, a distinction he is keen to make in virtually all his work on philosophy of history, is one between *historical research* and *history-writing*⁷⁴. Ankersmit radicalises this distinction by establishing a logical and semantic gap between

⁶⁸ Menezes, 3.

⁶⁹ Moskalewicz, 252.

⁷⁰ SHE, xvii.

⁷¹ Tamm, 502.

⁷² Kuukkanen, 1.

⁷³ Rigney, 190.

⁷⁴ See for example NL, 8; HR, 52 – 54; MTR, 60.

statement and text. The level of statements functions in a way a contemporary logician wants it to. A statement in a historical narrative is a true proposition that can refer to a subject in the past. Nothing prevents anyone from thinking that texts have meaning this way. However contemporary logic and epistemology cannot account for what happens when history books are written.⁷⁵ What follows, is that a text – be it for example a history book – once it is written, cannot be altered in any way. It remains forever an expression of its writer’s vision. Not only as language, but as something more fundamental in representation.

Historical Experience and Historical Representation

Representation then, whatever its means, is human endeavour to give a substitute of an individual’s experience of the past. The notion of representation in Ankersmit comes from aesthetics and takes after Nelson Goodman and Arthur Danto⁷⁶, though his aesthetic ideas also bear a striking resemblance to Ernst Cassirer’s writings about art⁷⁷. The basic idea is that a philosopher of history is better served by the notion of representation as an act of *substitution* rather than *resemblance*. Just as an artist’s attempt to create a representation of a thing is not merely an attempt to capture the resemblance of said thing, but also to pronounce some essential aspect in it and convey some message. So is the case in history-writing: A historian’s thesis is not description of the past. Instead, it is a holistic attempt to create a representation of the historian’s point of view into the past. This point of view is what *historical representations* represent and what early on in Ankersmit’s work was called the *narrative substance*⁷⁸.

Ankersmit’s representation follows an aesthetic path in describing how historiography connects with its topics. A “historical realist” taking the epistemological route will always be

⁷⁵ NL, 186 – 187.

⁷⁶ See e.g. HR p. 222 – 231 for Danto; and Ankersmit 1995, p. 219 – 232. The idea also is presented in MTR, chapter 4, and latest in WEM section 4.

⁷⁷ In the *Essay on Man*, Cassirer’s late English introduction book to his ideas, art is describes as one class of Cassirer’s “symbolic forms” in which an artist patterns reality (say a landscape or a model) not by imitating its perception of it in categories of sense-data, but by attempting to represent his or her qualitative experience or emotions of it in the piece of art being made.

⁷⁸ This change in terminology seems to appear in the mid-nineties and is related closely to pronounced aestheticism. In *History and Tropology* p. 113 – 114: “The narrative substance of a historical narrative is its set of statements that together embody the representation of the past that is proposed in the historical narrative in question”. And in Ankersmit 1995 p. 230: “The narrative substance in which this interaction takes place is a ‘representation as –’, a representation of the past under a particular aspect which is established by the narrative substance”. In *Historical Representation*, six years later narrative substances no longer appear.

bound for disappointment, because he has to take one of two routes: Either go against the narrativist insight via reductivism and claim that history books are nothing but sets of true propositions – and even then you have problems, since the sequence of these propositions will have an effect on the meaning of the whole. Or admit that a historian will always create his “realistic” description according to the standards of his own cultural and intellectual background as per the thesis of “theory-ladenness”⁷⁹. The term refers to a notion developed from Duhem’s and Quine’s thesis that scientific theories cannot be tested in isolation from theory itself as any test configuration will require theoretical frameworks, however primitive. The same applies to suggestion made about the “realism” of any historical narrative. A generalising frame of reference is impossible to achieve in history-writing. This view leads to “narrative idealism”. Or the idea that what history-writing gives us is *proposals for seeing the past as something*⁸⁰. E.g. seeing the years from 400 to 800 AD as the “dark ages”.

In NL narrative substances are referred to as “images” in the mind of the historian and it is claimed that they are constructed by the historian’s mind⁸¹. This claim, along with the association of narrative substances to colligatory concepts and Ankersmit’s insistence that in historical texts only the particular can be expressed, have attracted criticism and accusations of postmodernism⁸². However, Ankersmit has argued that there is more to such “images” than just the construction mental representations. The narrative substance is a representational construct composed of statements. It is the historians attempt to present a vision she has of some part of the past⁸³. Ankersmit makes use of the notion of the *sublime* as it appears in European philosophy since Kant and Schopenhauer⁸⁴. The former denied any continuance between these two, while the latter saw in art and especially music a way to access noumenal reality in sublime experience. Ankersmit suggests that the notion of sublime experience explain how a historian has access to *things themselves* or the noumenal, that is, the past. A historian can engage with the past and break through the objective/subjective barrier that in our phenomenal worldview is unassailable, in a nostalgic or traumatic experience that makes her realise the difference/distance between the present and the

⁷⁹ Ankersmit 1989 21 – 27. NL, 75 – 82.

⁸⁰ NL, 83 – 84.

⁸¹ NL, 81. “For the ‘historical landscape’ in not *given* to the historian; he has to *construct* it”.

⁸² See e.g. Zagorin 1990; Zammito 1998, 2005.

⁸³ NL, 187.

⁸⁴ MTR, .

past.⁸⁵ This is not an act per se. It simply takes place, once the historian is sufficiently knowledgeable about her subject. An experience takes place and provides a new way of representing the past⁸⁶. You could say, that historical research facilitates experience and that *historical experience* gives the represented. Finally, aesthetics is the way one turns this into a representation. This process is invisible to someone who sees in historiography nothing but epistemological meaning. This kind of meaning is crucial, for without it nothing could be written in a way that others could read it. But for Ankersmit the situation is the same as with an artist that has no technique. No-one would claim that the vision is secondary to technique. The opposite is true.

Sublime experience is the precondition of *history writing*. Yet its status declined in historicism. Ankersmit writes that historical experience, or *nostalgia* as he called it in *History and Topology*, “became suspect since its resistance to the reification of the past seemed to question and even to endanger historical truth”⁸⁷. As historicists wanted to “erase themselves”, so to speak, from the past, nostalgic approach to history writing was rebuked. Ankersmit sees however the idea continue in historicism through Friedrich Meinecke and Johan Huizinga⁸⁸. “Nostalgic experience” allows for the past and the present to become one. An example may help to further elaborate the point: Some of Ankersmit’s favourite examples of history books give a hint of what is meant by this. Huizinga’s *The Autumn of the Middle Ages* or Braudel’s *The Mediterranean* belong to this category. Both present in their thesis in powerful metaphors that supposedly emerged to these famous historians. These metaphors are not the product of historical research. Braudel never read from anywhere that there are many Mediterranean seas. He might rather be said to have experienced his vast subject as such and used the metaphor as his technique to communicate his vision.

And indeed, on many remarks Ankersmit laments a meticulous and overly cautious approach of modern historians in their work, where engagement such as given above seems to be non-existent⁸⁹. In an interview Ankersmit has suggested that historians tend to ignore historical experience due to the unpopularity of the term in professional discourse⁹⁰. To go along with

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⁸⁶ SHE,

⁸⁷ HT, 202.

⁸⁸ HT, 207

⁸⁹ HR, 2 – 4 or *Invitation to Historians* in *Rethinking history* 7:3 415 – 417.

⁹⁰ Moskalevicz, 260.

accusations of postmodernism, the notion of historical experience has also been criticised heavily⁹¹. Whatever one may think of it, it does allow Ankersmit to claim that for historiography not just “anything goes”, since facts remain central and there is this suggested point of contact with the past. Or, as Ankersmit has claimed many times over, there is no past in existence but the one we experience in the present. And while this is so, he does not abandon rationality, but suggests it be allowed to function not only through epistemology, but also aesthetics and thus representation of “historical reality”. While each vision of the past is an individual one, history gets its meaning from the relations of such visions put forth in histories, usually in texts. And while one may claim that the thesis of a historical text is nothing more but a complex meaning in the epistemological sense, this fails to account for experience. We experience different things when reading the same text.

In describing Ankersmit and the criticisms his writings on historical experience have received, I find a good analogy in contemporary philosophy of mind, where different schools of thought concerning what David Chalmers has dubbed the “hard problem of consciousness”⁹² exist. Physicalistically oriented philosophers explain the qualitative aspects of consciousness and experience away in reduction while dualists such as Chalmers himself demand that subjective consciousness and *experience* be taken seriously and that a fundamental place be reserved for it in science. In a way, Ankersmit is in the same position:

Without experience, there is no consciousness. So, if we move from language to consciousness, the issue of experience becomes an ineluctable item on the philosopher’s agenda⁹³.

Historiography presents the subjective in order to get to the objective through debates concerning accounts of history that cross over the same topics. An analytic philosopher wishing to see in historiography nothing but justified true claims will never be able come to agreement with this. For Ankersmit, experience and meaning are fundamental and take

⁹¹ For what is probably the most notable example in this, see Peter Icke and *Frank Ankersmit’s Lost Cause*. In the book, Icke laments that Ankersmit has abandoned language for the sake of experience. However, experience is already strongly present in NL through Leibniz and in fact it is discussed in the last section of Chapter VI of the book quite lengthily.

⁹² Introduced in *The Conscious Mind*, the “hard problem of consciousness” addresses the explanatory gap between the subjective and the objective. Subjectively there is a qualitative aspect or “Likeness” to sensations that cannot be explained away by reduction.

⁹³ SHE, 6.

precedence over truth and reference and representation allows a bypass of conventional language in historiography⁹⁴.

The logic of representation in Ankersmit maintains that texts are representations of individual entities⁹⁵, which are called the *represented*s of historical representations or *aspects*⁹⁶ of the past. The first two terms have an unshakeable Leibnizian feel to them and both have been given an analogy in Leibniz's metaphysics⁹⁷. It is claimed that "narrative substance" is not part of language, but a *thing*, which has statements as its properties. Statements therefore have a double-function in Ankersmit's philosophical approach to historiography. Firstly, and more familiarly, they refer to things, subjects, events and entities in the past. But each one also functions as an irremovable part of the whole text, which only as a whole can be a representation of the historian's vision or thesis of the past. Notice that some of the "entities" or "subjects" of the past may be narrative substances in themselves. A historical account is an attempt to communicate some meaningful insight about the past. A new viewpoint to a past event or character. The double function just described reflects the already mentioned division of the historians work to historical research and history-writing.

Colligation in Historical Representation

Aside from Leibniz and historicists, W. H. Walsh is mentioned as an inspiration to Ankersmit's narrative logic. William Whewell had coined the term *colligation* in the philosophy of science of 19th century. He described it as the mental process of organising empirical data into a

⁹⁴ In NL p. 251, Ankersmit makes an interesting reference to philosophy of consciousness: "The essential difference between robots or computers and human beings lies, in my opinion, in the capacity of human beings to constitute the *Ns* 'I_{int}'". With *I_{int}* he means roughly subjective identity: Conscious experience of self.

⁹⁵ The best explanation for the perfect individuality of these textual entities is found in *Representational Logic* (chapter 6 in Admir Skodo's *Other Logics*) and in HSI. In both Ankersmit distinguishes the notions of uniqueness from individuality. A unique thing is logically unique by contemporary standards if it features universal a set of properties that are not contained in anything else. So long as this condition is fulfilled, the thing is unique, but not an individual in the strong sense of the word. Ankersmit is adamant that an individual is not defined (individuated) until every single one of its properties is listed. The example of Barack Obama is given. If there is an *x* that has the properties *president of the USA* and *is visiting China at t*. Just by these properties *x*'s uniqueness can be established, but not its individuality as President Obama.

⁹⁶ A fruitful notion, the *aspect* provides the best metaphor for what I believe Ankersmit means. In MTR, it is described as the middle ground between things in themselves and the properties of things. An aspect of a thing may be viewed without this aspect being a property. The aspect of past comes about with the sublime.

⁹⁷ As we will see in chapter 1, the notion of an indivisible substance is of paramount importance in Leibniz's metaphysics and in the idealistic version of his system, Leibniz seems to insist on the phenomenality (or representationality) of reality as we know it.

concept that can express a general law⁹⁸. In the 1950's Walsh introduced *colligation* to philosophy of history. He went through different positions concerning the notion, but eventually his "colligatory concept" referred to an interpretation of history⁹⁹. The idea being that historians tend to find connections between different events in history and as a result, begin to see them as a process and name the newly formed larger concepts fittingly and often metaphorically. The "renaissance" or "the French revolution" are fine examples¹⁰⁰. Originally, Walsh's Colligation is "the procedure of explaining an event by tracing its intrinsic relations to other events and locating it in its historical context"¹⁰¹. However, Walsh was somewhat ambivalent about what exactly the nature of *colligation* was. He later confessed that colligating history in "dominant ideas" that guided the actions of historical characters was not a reliable way of presenting the past. He thus took on a more interpretative role for *colligation* that approached constructivism in its outlook. A colligatory concept is an attempt to account for the facts and illuminate to the reader a suggestion of what took place. Ankersmit follows this latter interpretation.

A most striking move is made by Ankersmit in partly removing the colligatory concept from the mental by giving his narrative substance the characteristics of Leibnizian substance. Narrative substances or the already mentioned "images" represented by historical representations (texts) are *things* instead of linguistic entities or mental representations¹⁰². So, are they then not unlike *senses* in Fregean semantics, as abstract entities that are outside language but intrinsically related to it¹⁰³? On the level of historical research, one could indeed say so. Then one would be ascribing to a Fregean predicate logic in ascribing meaning to a text. As was said in the beginning of this section Ankersmit insists that when we are dealing with historical texts, a representationalist logic is applied. And then texts, as representations, have no meaning¹⁰⁴. They only do once they "enter the minds" on other historians. The mind of a grand historian is, from this point of view not a constructor of meaning. Rather it is a spewing profligacy of historical experience (i.e. visions, possibly sublime, about the past)

⁹⁸ Snyder, section 2.

⁹⁹ On Walsh and the evolution of his colligatory concept, see Ritter, 50 – 54.

¹⁰⁰ McCullach, 153.

¹⁰¹ Walsh, 59. Also Shaw, 11.

¹⁰² NL, 93.

¹⁰³ See Margolis, section 1.3. *Concepts as Fregean Senses*.

¹⁰⁴ WEM, . Ankersmit calls texts, in this paper, meaningless *signs*.

which becomes the essence of his or her thesis. One of the points of view is chosen as the represented of the historical representation based of how it is seen to fit in with previous representations. A historian must apply sources and facts truthfully, but there must be room for any view that can be supported by these facts. Historical representations pronounce aspects of the past that are represented by the historian with a text in the aesthetic fashion described above.

Representational Logic Applied

A difficult to discern facet in Ankersmit's philosophy of historical representation is the one that discusses its application (or lack thereof). Other more analytically aligned philosophers of history such as Daniel Gorman and Paul Roth have expressed dissatisfaction with Ankersmit's work due to its propensity to insulate historiographical texts from language. Both argue that removing texts from language is an unnecessary and potentially harmful act, that can only lead to incomprehension. Arguments go along the lines that while the theory may be internally coherent, it has no application whatsoever when concerning the historian since it only serves to divide historians by destroying their means of communication. There is no normative aspect or praxis to it.¹⁰⁵ Ankersmit can mount a defence by making again clear the distinction between historical research and history-writing and arguing that in the former indeed all available outside paradigms and norms may be mounted to produce new visions. In an interview with M. Moskalewicz, he has stated:

I have no pretension to change the historical discipline. If I have any revolutionary pretensions (in spite of my rather conservative turn of mind), then these are for philosophy only. Indeed, there I would like to rearrange things a little.¹⁰⁶

Considering his commitment to historicism I believe in general he does not think there is anything dramatically wrong in what historians do. They follow methodologies and produce new knowledge about the past accordingly, yet without any universal normative theory dictating their actions¹⁰⁷. More generally, he is addressing philosophers of history with the intent of creating an "apriorist foundation" for discussion in the discipline¹⁰⁸. What he has

¹⁰⁵ Jonathan Gorman 1997: *Philosophical Fascination with Whole Historical Texts*. Paul Roth 2013: *Whistling History*. I thank Daniel Fairbrother for directing me to these reviews.

¹⁰⁶ Moskalewicz, 256.

¹⁰⁷ Most recently in his response to his critics he expresses explicitly that philosophers of history should refrain from advising historians. *The Journal of the Philosophy of History*. Volume 12, no. 3 P. 489 – 490

¹⁰⁸ WEM, introduction.

expressed concerning historians, though, is a regret that historians in modernity lack a certain “urgency” about their work, referring to what I believe is a lack of bold theses in big themes that could ignite fruitful debate. For this purpose he has developed what in NL is called the “scope criterion” and is referred to in another part as “narrative pragmatics”. The tricky thing is that thought demarcation between the logic and pragmatic parts can be fathomed, the difficulty in doing so is recognised by Ankersmit himself in NL:

...at least a number of the reasons for our historiographical preferences are closely tied up with the logical issues considered in Chapter VI and in the present chapter, narrative logic itself should not be confused with the problems its application gives rise to.¹⁰⁹

The chapters mentioned here are the ones that establish narrative substances as the logical unit of historiography and discuss its characteristics, similar to a Leibnizian substance. The pragmatic part is about how a historian should aim at a balance between the factual and what is suggested by her in situating her new historical representation to the existing matrix of representations. Somewhat unexpectedly, Leibniz makes an appearance here and his notions of the monad and mathematical function are put to use in helping define what “good historiography” would amount to.

Definition of some Central Concepts

Even with the threat of repetition, since in this thesis two layers of complex terminology have to be maintained (Ankersmit’s and that of Leibniz) I saw it best to include here some central terms in Ankersmit’s work that may help less advanced readers of this work to keep up:

Experience – Ankersmit interprets Leibniz’s metaphysics as an idealistic theory of substance. This means that substance is perception that is sometimes accompanied by conscious experience. If the past is to become present, this is where it must take place. *Historical experience* is the term used by Ankersmit referring to an identification of the past in a historian’s consciousness. Such an experience cannot be objective due to its subjective and qualitative aspects. Sometimes the concept of the *sublime* is used to describe the tendency of *historical experience* to blur the distinction between the past and the present even.

Objectivity – Objectivity only comes about after several representations of the same part of the past have been given. Only multiple points of view can enter conversation and begin the

¹⁰⁹ NL, 133.

process of approaching objectivity. Representations will metaphorically form a cluster of given meanings that will gradually help a community of historians map the past. Debates about the meaning of the past is constant and can be explained. A working historian would have no idea where to begin her research, were there no previous representations of the past to begin with.

The Past – We experience historical reality and even though memory, language and theory are a necessary precondition of historical experience, experience is nevertheless the most fundamental aspect of our being. It is being. Past reality, as it was, is unreachable in terms of epistemology. One can only theorise what may have happened. Nominally, the past is beyond the subjective and the objective and can only be reached through the what is described with the notion of *sublime*.

The past that is represented in historiography *is* the experience the historian had. Ankersmit supposes that while truthful propositions about past things can be made; all claims about notions in the past, be they about Napoleon’s personality or democracy in ancient Athens, are bound to require representation in the vein of metaphor. In fact, attempts at describing democracy in the present face the same problems because without history, the notion could not be anchored semantically. Aesthetics is the best philosophical route for communicating our historical experience.

Representation – a substitute, most often textual, for the aspect of the past the historian wants to pronounce. In the discipline of history, reports of a historian’s work are almost exclusively whole texts. Hence, the focus of Ankersmit’s philosophy on the text and alternative ways of approaching it logically. Texts may be said to refer, but not to the past. Only to the represented, which is an experienced “vision” of the past. A historian “knows” when the thesis is right the same way an artist “knows” when her art is executed properly, though its impossible to describe this process, except perhaps to other artist who have similar experiences. Similarly, historical representations can only be fruitfully discussed between historians.

Represented – The “image” a historian has about the past. It may be thought of as a constructed semantic entity, but Ankersmit provides with the notion of *Historical experience* the possibility that the represented is an *aspect* of past itself. Not *the* past. Not *some property*

of the past. But a result of the historians internal noumenal experience of past reality. An ontological explanation for aspects is given in a profile. If one looks at a house or a person from one side and then from another, one will have seen two aspects of the same thing¹¹⁰. Such is the quality of human perception. To perceive a thing simultaneously from all point of view is quite impossible and the same applies to the past.

These three central concepts make up what Ankersmit calls a three place-model of historical representation. Representation takes place between two variables. The representation and the represented. However, when it comes down to historical writing, nobody would deny that have the case of a person attempting to establish something about the *past*.

Truth – Just as the statements in a narrative have two functions, so are there two levels of truth in historiography. The commonsensical notion of correspondent truth of propositions, and the aesthetic truth in the level of whole texts. On this level, a historian discovers truths about the past by approaching a subject from a particular angle. Correspondence between propositions and affairs are irrelevant since no access can be made thereby to past reality and therefore meaning is what guides *representational truth*.

¹¹⁰ Ankersmit 2017, 45.

I – Philosophy of History and Leibniz’s Substance-theory

In this chapter I will explore Leibniz’s philosophy by first delving into his “mature” metaphysics as well as exploring his ideas about logic and the *characteristica universalis*. We will see how Leibniz has acted as an inspiration to historicist thinkers and from there continue to explain how Ankersmit has proceeded to develop historicism and applied the interpretations the historicists made about Leibniz’s substance theory. Ankersmit has explored the ideas of earlier historicists and Leibniz-scholars and applied these in creating a philosophy of history that does not aim at providing historians with theoretical tools, but only to provide a basis for our understanding of what history is. I will propose that in Ankersmit’s work different aspects of Leibniz’s metaphysics are utilised and that the Monadology is present not only in historical representation but also in his notion of historical experience. Here I will provide the basics and further elaboration of the evolution and consequences of Ankersmit’s Leibnizianism in both these dimensions (of representation and experience) are explored in the following chapters. I will end this chapter with a brief investigation into Leibniz’s intensional logic and its relation to Ankersmit’s work and how it too, can be seen as contributing to the Leibnizian system Ankersmit has in place.

I wish to begin with explaining the basics of the Monadology itself, and will do so with a citation:

Indeed, considering the matter exactly, 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 perceivers¹¹¹.

This insert, taken from correspondence between the Dutch mathematician and physicist Burcher de Volder and G. W. Leibniz during the years 1698 – 1706, is one of the first expressions of an emerging metaphysical system that would stimulate the curiosity of generations of philosophers. A person with some knowledge about western history of metaphysics may interpret that here we have an idealist brand of ontology – and a pluralist one – in which perception seems to be the defining aspect of substances. This notion of substance as perception or alternatively as *representation*, is a central theme in this paper.

¹¹¹ Letter from G.W. Leibniz to Burcher de Volder, 30 June 1704. Cited from Garber p. 313.

This is because the philosophy historiography defended by Frank Ankersmit is built around this such an account of representation. His *historical representation* or rather, what is *represented* by such a representation being an analogy for Leibnizian substance.

In 1714, two years before his passing, Leibniz wrote *The Principles of Philosophy*, known to later generations simply as *the Monadology*¹¹². Written at the request of Prince Eugene of Savoy and Nicolas Rémond, a Parisian scholar and courtier, it could be thought of as an introduction to some of Leibniz's most central ideas, though Ariew and Garber describe it instead as a condensation of Leibniz's ideas as presented in his *Théodicée*¹¹³. In the *Monadology*, the substance-theory described in the letters to de Volder is more thoroughly presented. The beginning of the text is constructed around the concept of "monad", characterised as a perceiving substance, or substance as perception. What is characteristic of the monad is its indivisibility. A monad has no physical dimensions and no parts, so it cannot be divided. Monads are indestructible soul-like entities with ever-changing states of perception and consciousness¹¹⁴. They pass from state to state driven by an intrinsic and internal force which Leibniz calls *appetition*. Every monad is an individual and therefore one of a kind, a matter related to it being a point of view to all other monads.¹¹⁵ Each one reflects the entire universe, and some do so consciously, being capable of memory and distinct perception. These monads are called souls.¹¹⁶ Souls occupy the highest echelon of the system, and you could categorise them further into animal souls and human souls¹¹⁷. What separates the human mind from all other monads is knowledge of necessary truths, or abstract thought

¹¹² See Bennett, Jonathan 2017. Translation with notes: *The Principles of Philosophy known as Monadology* by G. W. Leibniz, 1712. Theorems at the beginning lay out the foundations of his idealistic metaphysics while the further you read the more applied uses are approached. Leibniz eventually discusses in the text what we could call philosophy of mind (§ 17 – 28), corporate substances (§61 – 82), theology (§83 – 88) and in a sense ethics (§89 – 90), among other things. As said, the *Monadology* was a commissioned introduction to Leibniz's ideas at that time.

¹¹³ Ariew & Garber, 213. On when and why the *Monadology* was written: Antognazza, 500 – 502.

¹¹⁴ Leibniz himself uses a French word of his own invention: *Aperception*. Both Ariew & Garber and Bennett also use the English word "consciousness" here and Bennett also offers "awareness". See §14 in the translations.

¹¹⁵ See, § 1 – 6 in the *Monadology*. About change and properties in monads §11 - 13. About the uniqueness of monads § 8 – 9. My reference here is *The Principles of Philosophy, or, the Monadology* in Ariew & Garber 213 – 214.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.* § 19, 20.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.* § 14. Leibniz's disagreed with Descartes in that he suggested that animals have an inner life complete with feelings similar to human beings.

and philosophy¹¹⁸. I.e. unlike “mere monads”, human beings can also *perceive that they perceive*.

Perhaps the most counterintuitive thing about monads is the idea that there is no causality between them¹¹⁹. Monads have perceptions but nominally these are not of anything outside themselves. When it is said that a monad reflects all other monads, what is meant is that their internal perceptions are guaranteed by God in a *pre-established harmony*. In God’s chosen design, all monads are given a subjective set of consecutive perceptions that is laid into perfect synchronicity with those of all other monads. This is what Leibniz proposes as the guarantee that we can trust our common intuitions about phenomena. Perplexingly, monads never perceive an external reality *per se*, or things in themselves to put it in Kantian terms. Rather, they *are* unities of perception and this is all there is to what is noumenal. The problem with this is what Bertrand Russell, Frank Ankersmit (and many others, I am sure) have called the “Leibnizian dilemma”. If everything is subjective in this way, what need is there for a pre-established harmony? Why insist on temporal synchronicity, if all substances are causally insulated from every other? It is easy to see that the system is outdated. Our interest in this problem is limited to Ankersmit’s solution to it, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

As mentioned earlier, the question of Leibniz’s idealism is a debated issue. While some scholars argue that Leibniz’s late metaphysics is exclusively idealist and that the corporeal is illusory, others pronounce him as someone who presented multiple theories about reality without utter commitment to any. In contemporary debate about Leibniz, scholars like Daniel Garber and Glenn Hartz, propose that Leibniz was a “theory pluralist”¹²⁰. Hartz argues that the interpretation that Leibniz is a pure idealist must be rejected on account of the many writings in his later years that supported a theory of corporeal substances. He concludes that Leibniz was someone who experimented with “wild abandon” and never succeeded choosing between his substance theories¹²¹. Garber’s idea is similar in that he proposes that until the very end, Leibniz was looking for a better and more complete theory on substance¹²². Some commentators, such as Jeffrey McDonough have even offered to resolve divisions of

¹¹⁸ Bennett, Jonathan 2017. Translation with notes: *The Principles of Philosophy known as Monadology* by G. W. Leibniz, 1712. § 28 – 30.

¹¹⁹ Ariew & Garber, 213 – 214: § 7.

¹²⁰ See the part about Leibniz in the introduction.

¹²¹ See Hartz: *Why Corporeal Substances Keep Popping up in Leibniz’s Later Philosophy*.

¹²² Garber, 386 – 388.

interpretation by presenting Leibniz as a conciliator for his contemporaries in the matter of substance¹²³. McDonough argues that with his two accounts of substance Leibniz attempted to conciliate Aristotelian and Platonic theories concerning substance. Such an approach would fit Leibniz's profile well as he inhabited various intellectual traditions and appealed to and adopted ideas from members of all of them.

I mention such interpretations, because Ankersmit commits closely to the monadology as Leibniz's substance theory, making this very clear in his conversation with Tamm¹²⁴. As Fairbrother has argued, this is problematic for Ankersmit's "Leibnizianism" if it is indeed the case that "(The Garber-)Leibniz vacillates between formal and material (or corporeal) theories in the course of his philosophical career, and it is within the range of this vacillation we find various interpretations of Leibniz' concept of monads"¹²⁵. However, the problem is alleviated, if we expressly commit to the notion of "substance" as it is given in the *Monadology* and subsequently commit to the *Monadology* as Leibniz's *metaphysics*. His "first philosophy", as he states in the Clarke-correspondence¹²⁶. This would make sense for Ankersmit because he wants to articulate a "first philosophy" for history and thus provide an "Archimedean point in philosophy of history, so that one can draw up from that point, again, by means of apriorist argument, a conception of historical knowledge and of the semantics of the writing of history"¹²⁷. So, he is not interested in providing norms for, but the "conception" of history and in this his system is indeed an analogy to the metaphysics of the *Monadology* and *its* substance. Analogously, then, any *applicable* theory of history would follow not from Leibniz's metaphysical notion of substance, but from his theory of corporeal substance.

Arguments have been made against the *Monadology* being Leibniz's official metaphysics. Addressing these is a task well beyond me, and in the context of this work I am mostly content in having established a coherent view of what Ankersmit thinks. However, the letters to Samuel Clarke do speak for the *Monadology*, as in them Leibniz clearly expresses that the notions of space and temporality are phenomenal occurrences that have no independent

¹²³ McDonough, *Leibniz's Conciliatory Account of Substance*.

¹²⁴ Tamm, 498. Ankersmit says: ".---his monadology, or theory of the substance has been absolutely basic to me right from my first fledgling and still desultory attempts to get hold of the secrets of the writing of history down to the present".

¹²⁵ Fairbrother 2018a, 11. The first brackets are my addition.

¹²⁶ Ariew & Garber, 333. My underlining.

¹²⁷ WEM, 4.

existence. Also, Leibniz expresses here his conviction that the soul is a simple substance and that a pre-established harmony is what ensures that the occurrences of the external world correspond to our perceptions of it, i.e. that the noumenal is in harmony with the phenomenal.¹²⁸ While differing opinions about Leibniz's substance theory have been put forth, for example by Daniel Garber, who suggest that the *Monadology* was not Leibniz's final view. Here he is convincing in arguing that Leibniz's idealistic metaphysics only came about rather late in his life. He is less convincing in arguing that Leibniz continually looked for alternative theories in metaphysics. For example, he presents the De Bosses -correspondence and stipulations for the new notion of *substantial bonds* as evidence of a new attempt at reformulating his metaphysics¹²⁹. But he fails to report Leibniz's explicit statement historically occurring right after his own period of investigating the correspondence ends, that he prefers the more parsimonious theory of monads¹³⁰. While he is certainly right that Leibniz offered different theories for different fields of study, I do not think the *Monadology's* role as Leibniz's *metaphysics* can be challenged. In his letters to Clarke Leibniz argues for the monadology implicitly, since he denies all possibility of absolute space and time. His relational versions of these notions follow from monadic metaphysics¹³¹. Naturally, Leibniz had also his corporeal substances, but these go beyond metaphysics and the theory of corporeal substance can be seen as supervening on the monadic one.

The Monadology in Historicism and in Ankersmit

Originally historicism is the movement that made history into an academic discipline in its own right. Efforts by men such as Leopold von Ranke saw history become professionalised by demanding a rigorous methodological approach to sources through which historical research was to be conducted.¹³² Now, a critical distinction already made during the introduction, must be repeated here: One between historical research and history-writing¹³³. While historicism presented a unified front in demanding a scientific approach to sources, it was not altogether

¹²⁸ Aho & Roinila, 366 – 367. Points 29 – 37 in Leibniz's third letter to Clarke.

¹²⁹ Garber 2009. The development, in the letters between de Bosses and Leibniz, of the notion of *substantial bonds*, is described in Chapter 9. This might relate to the fact that the 1989 book Daniel Garber published with Roger Ariew containing Leibniz's writings cuts the correspondence right at this point.

¹³⁰ The letter and Leibniz's statement to De Bosses is referred to in John Whipple's article, section 6. See reference 192 above.

¹³¹ McDonough 2014, Section 5.2.

¹³² For a history of historicism, see Iggers, 26 – 28.

¹³³ See p. 19.

clear from the get-go, how historians should report their findings. Ranke and his contemporaries had to think of a way to present the results of historical research meaningfully. They had to synthesise historical knowledge around a theme and write *about* something.

What specifically to focus on in a historical text is a question all working historians must face. Facts about the past can be established in historical research, but it is another matter altogether to write a book on history. The *narrativist insight* is at the heart of this matter¹³⁴. A historian needs to find some central theme to his work. Something to argue for. Facts must be stated in some order and something meaningful must be insinuated through them, lest the result resemble merely a list of facts. Additionally, such a list of facts – unless it is completely arbitrary – can already be interpreted to be semantically more than a sum of the meanings of its parts.

Ranke saw a problem in presenting history as a grand whole as those following Hegel's view of history wished to do. At the heart of the early historicist argument was that sources had to come before narrative continuity.¹³⁵ Facts would be produced from sources through a critical investigation and only then could the historian begin to write around a theme. Herman Paul describes the early historicist problem of *Historical Justification*, i.e. how to decide what is important about the past, thus:

---in spite of their anti-Hegelian stances, the early historicists combined their increasingly sophisticated methods of historical inquiry (partly borrowed from classical philology and biblical scholarship) with an idealist belief in the 'meaningfulness' of the historical process. They could insist on the individuality of nations and epochs, or on the need to falsify historical legends and myths, because they believed in a metaphysical reality or providential power that endowed all nations, persons, and events with ultimate meaning.¹³⁶

So, while speculative historical holism was put to the background to allow historical research to be impactful, there remained a commitment to metaphysical entities that historical research was set out to support. It is worth noting, that this has been elaborated by Ankersmit many times in his work: "It is to historicism and historians like Ranke that we owe this achievement of fragmenting the whole of history into independence [*independent*] entities

¹³⁴ See p. 19.

¹³⁵ Day, 7. For instance, Hegel saw the origin of modern concepts such as "freedom" or "nation" in the ancient world. He had a teleological vision in which these concepts were perfected during the course of history. Ranke detested this approach and preferred the concrete before the abstract and evidence before theory.

¹³⁶ Paul, 66.

or particulars”¹³⁷. The early historicists saw individual and distinctive *entelechies* in the past itself that were described in their writing and provided evidence for with sources. Think of such an entelechy, for example, as a central character or a political institution in a historiography (a King, or a nation). Most of political history follows this route and Ranke himself, for one, wrote that states may figuratively be said to have individual personalities in historical writing¹³⁸. Ankersmit disagrees with such a view and in arguing against this he has developed the ideas of previous historicists.

Jaap den Hollander calls Leibniz the “the philosophical grandfather of historicist thought”¹³⁹. He justified the use of this friendly term by specifically bringing up two historicist thinkers that were influenced by Leibniz in their own ways: Friedrich Meinecke and indirectly Ernst Cassirer. Meinecke promoted Leibniz’s concept of simple substance in his philosophy of history¹⁴⁰. He saw in Leibniz and specifically his account for individuality a forerunner for historicism and explained how, via Herder and Goethe among others, 19th century historicism came to life as a celebration of historical individuality that took both personal and collective forms in great persons and nations¹⁴¹. While Meinecke certainly did not propound Leibniz’s metaphysics, he did see in the *Monadology* a model for historiography. That is, that historical reality should be understood to be about self-sustaining, ever-changing, individual entities the story of which could be written down to capture the essence of meaningful history. Here we should recall that monads are individuals that pass through their states, utterly unaffected by other such individuals:

We could give the name ‘entelechy’ to all simple substances or created monads, because they have within them a certain perfection....; there is a kind of self-sufficiency which makes them sources of their own internal actions—makes them immaterial automata, as it were.¹⁴²

In history then, one can thus think of individual entities that unravel in a grand harmony of things – the life-stories which can be reported in historiography. Some readers likely will think

¹³⁷ Ankersmit 1994, 186. My suggestion in cursive. Historism and historicism both refer to 19th century historical theory and the movement led by von Ranke, not Karl Popper’s views on speculative philosophy of history.

¹³⁸ Den Hollander, 215.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, 211. His article is not precisely about Leibniz, but he does provide insightful background to the influence Leibniz had on historicism.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*. 215

¹⁴¹ Meinecke: *Historism – Rise of a New Historical Outlook*. The 1936 book presents Leibniz as a forerunner to historicism and devotes a full section of the first chapter to him.

¹⁴² See Bennett, Jonathan 2017. Translation with notes: *The Principles of Philosophy known as Monadology* by G. W. Leibniz, 1712. §18.

of Hegel and his concept of *Geist* in this connection. However, a defining distinction can most easily be made by focusing on the concept of the individual as reported above. The Hegelian historicist will see modes of the same world-spirit, while the “Leibnizian historicist” sees myriad independent entities¹⁴³. And again, when one thinks about a history book and the narrativist insight, the analogy seems an intuitive one. Works of history tend to focus on change happening in between points of time in some entelechy-like subject such as “Germany” and historical figures, like “Napoleon”, might also be thought of in this way.

Another philosopher forming an important link in the chain leading from Leibniz to Ankersmit is Ernst Cassirer. As den Hollander suggests, Cassirer was influenced by Leibniz’s ideas about mathematical function and calculus, both of which he saw as an integral part of Leibniz’s metaphysics¹⁴⁴. Cassirer interpreted Leibniz as having treated his notion of the monadic substance as a mathematical function, in which different inputs and outputs produce alternative points of view to reality:

Each monad is, with all its contents, a completely enclosed world, which copies or mirrors no other being but merely includes and governs by its own law the whole of its presentations; but these different individual worlds express, nevertheless, a common universe and a common truth. This community, however, does not come about by these different pictures of the world being related to each other as copies of a common “original” but by the fact that they correspond functionally to each other in their inner relations and in the general form of their structure.¹⁴⁵

There is no common world but the one we imagine. Cassirer interprets the Monadology by seeing each monad as a functional representation of the universe. He makes an analogy out of this to argue for what Michael Friedman calls the genetic conception of scientific knowledge. Cassirer, in his philosophy of science, thought that science was about structure and the ordering of reality in a purely mathematical way, and not about generalisation on the basis of induction, as some contemporaries claimed. Scientific theorising or the ways of ordering knowledge thereby analogous to the monads, which mirror the universe in each of

¹⁴³ In *Historiography and Postmodernism* (p. 149), Ankersmit himself analogised speculative philosophy of history with a trunk of a tree while historicists, as described above was analogised to the branches. The point being that no historicist would attempt to capture all of history in the way speculative philosophy of history did. Postmodernism, to which Ankersmit has been subsequently attached, is told to said on the leaves of the tree. It’s also interesting that Ankersmit also cites Hegel as an influence in arguing for the precedence of representational meaning to propositional meaning. He writes of how Hegel saw the difference between philosophy and other sciences in that while other sciences deal with objects given by experience, philosophy must account for experience itself. See footnote in MTR p. 156. Ankersmit and Hegel have the starting point in experience, though by Ankersmit’s own account he is Leibnizian and the latter was Spinozist (HSI, p. 423).

¹⁴⁴ Den Hollander, 212.

¹⁴⁵ Cassirer 1926, 391 – 392.

their consecutive phases. Empirical reality only comes about in science through function-like theory which gives outputs based on inputs. Science has a history in different variants in this formalisation and what makes Cassirer distinct from analytic philosophers, according to Friedman, is that the formal scientific interpretations of reality are abstractions from a more fundamental process in his philosophy of genetic conception of scientific knowledge.¹⁴⁶ Science is a series of abstract formal structures that could be said to improve upon previous ones. Philosophy is not, for Cassirer, subservient to science in general as was suggested by the logical positivists. It's about providing a logical structure for what science itself is. This sets him up as a historicist. Theories are essentially defined by those they were developed as improvements upon.

A neo-Kantian originally, in later works, Cassirer became directly interested in other ways that human beings make sense of reality in art, myth and history. The philosophy of symbolic forms, as Cassirer called it, orients towards the history of human culture and explores how cultures and human beings in them apply symbols and impose expression to reality initially in order to cope in it and later to explain it¹⁴⁷. What never changes is the monadological (in Leibniz's sense) outlook of Cassirer's work. Gregory B. Moynahan writes of Cassirer's reading of Leibniz's monadology:

--it is the promise that there is always an infinity of qualitatively different transformations through which the world could be understood in the future and is understood by other monads in the present. For this reason our *perception of present experience* (and certainly of our selves and objects) is always provisional since it could always be proven to be rearticulated in a different form.¹⁴⁸

And he continues:

The concept of the monad – although itself ultimately metaphysically problematic for Cassirer – performs the invaluable historical service of allowing all assumptions about the difference of animate and inanimate life, “internal” and “external” experience and numerous other assumptions of western philosophy to be bracketed. Leibniz's philosophy avoids psychological and empirical assumptions, and avoids indeed any preconceived notion of reality itself.¹⁴⁹

In this interpretation there is no cartesian theatre in which reality is represented, but monads essentially are reality that is not divided up to categories like *objective* or *subjective* and this is the bottom level in this ontology. We, who make science and history, *are* the experience/reality. All the categories we use in constructing phenomenal reality *derive* from

¹⁴⁶ Friedman, section 3.

¹⁴⁷ Friedman, section 4 first paragraph.

¹⁴⁸ Moynahan, 102. My cursive.

¹⁴⁹ Moynahan, 93.

this experience. As we will see in the next chapter, this is something Ankersmit builds on when he develops his ideas on sublime historical experience. The *Monadology* is for Ankersmit a theory of the noumenal. The following citation is from a text that anticipated his book, *Sublime Historical Experience*:

Leibniz's monadology is mainly an attempt to explain how our conception of the phenomenal world and how our notions of the things it contains arise out of the manifold of the monad's perceptions (or experiences)¹⁵⁰.

But Ankersmit makes also another interpretation by stating in a later text:

This is Leibniz's principle of pre-established harmony. Thanks to it there is 'a reality' of which all monads have the same perceptions. Leibniz call this reality the 'phaenomena bene fundata'. It is a merely 'phaenomenal' reality, not to be confused with the actual metaphysical reality of the totality of all the monads.¹⁵¹

Are these citations not in contradiction? In the latter citation, it seems to be precisely the other way around. Here what is perceived and experienced is the phenomenal, and what is noumenal is the monadic system in itself. To explain what is taking place, one needs to think about Ankersmit's point of observation when making these claims. For the monad itself experience is noumenal, since the monad *is* experience¹⁵². This is how Ankersmit sees the matter in his philosophy of historical experience and here the historian's point of view indeed is the monad. For the purely theoretical outside observer (paradoxically, as we saw, there is nothing outside the monads) only the synchronised network of monads makes up reality. And this is the case in his philosophy of historical representation, or representational logic, where there is no meaning. Only the representations as meaningless signs.

Ankersmit reveals his influences by occasionally writing about the interpretations that European scholars not belonging to the tradition of analytic philosophy have made about the monadology and Leibniz's philosophy. In a footnote in *SHE* Ankersmit refers to the interpretation D. Mahnke made of Leibniz's work in *Leibnizens Synthese von Universalmathematik und Individualmetaphysik* and expresses that this interpretation proposes how "Leibniz's notion of the substance may enable us to show how the world view of the sciences (Frege) and that of the humanities (Saussure) are related".¹⁵³ In another text

¹⁵⁰ Ankersmit 2003, 432.

¹⁵¹ WEM, 7.

¹⁵² Moynahan, 103. This is Cassirer's interpretation to which Ankersmit states agreement in WEM, mentioning the former's Leibniz-interpretation in *Function and Concept*.

¹⁵³ SHE, 407 – 408 f25. In Ankersmit 2003, p. 432 he writes the same.

Ankersmit argues that “Universalmathematik” should be related to the universalism of the sciences and their reliance on mathematics, whereas the term “Individualmetaphysik” is suggestive of a world of individual entities as studied in the humanities, and especially in history¹⁵⁴. What this means is that Ankersmit sees in Mahnke’s interpretation of Leibniz a foundation for his own Leibnizian system, where the universal and the individual are reconciled in an attempt to provide a full account of what history is and how is, as a discipline, functions. Another influence, I believe, can indeed be found in Ernst Cassirer, whose ideas about the Monadology are very similar. I admit that due to his better availability, I perhaps stress the role of Cassirer unnecessary and misleadingly in this work. Eventually the point is, however, that his interpretation of Leibniz’s philosophy seems to agree with Ankersmit’s.

Two thoughts need to be established about Ankersmit and his relationship to historicism. Firstly, it is critical to note that Ankersmit endorses the historicist tradition, and while he criticises past historicists on their “essentialism”¹⁵⁵, he nevertheless feels that this tradition is the only one that has any chance of capturing the essence of history as a discipline. Early on, Ankersmit stated that “no one can write history as it is done by 90% of all living historians without being a historian” and consequently he has not changed his view¹⁵⁶. On another occasion, he has stated: “---no historical theory has guaranteed historical writing greater and better-deserved triumphs than historicism”¹⁵⁷. Secondly and for the purposes of this paper, more importantly, Ankersmit should thus be thought of as a revisionist of historicism. Nothing makes this clearer than a statement in the abstract of a 2013 paper: “This essay is an effort to rehabilitate the historicist argument”¹⁵⁸.

In this mentioned paper, called ‘History as the Science of the Individual’, Ankersmit comments on the historicist approach to history which attempts individualisation under vast holistic concepts, such as a state, in the past – as admirable, but erroneous¹⁵⁹:

First, the old historicist thesis that history is the science of the individual has always had a prima facie plausibility. But the historicists were confused about how they understood the individual: they did

¹⁵⁴ Ankersmit 2014, 103. He reports that the mentioned Mahnke’s book about Leibniz is fairly common reading for philosophy undergraduates in the German speaking world.

¹⁵⁵ NL, 115.

¹⁵⁶ NL, 8.

¹⁵⁷ HT, 238.

¹⁵⁸ HSI. Abstract.

¹⁵⁹ HSI 2013, 423 – 425.

neither distinguish between an extensionalist and an intensionalist use of the term, nor between individuality and uniqueness, nor between what I called weak and strong individuals.¹⁶⁰

The citation well describes his divergence from 19th century historicism. While historicists generally saw what historians were writing about in the past itself, Ankersmit argues that this *entelechy* exists only in the mind of the historian. As said, they tended treat historical figures such as “Napoleon” unproblematically as the extensions of historical texts. The problem here is, that extension is dependent on truth-value, which is unavailable to the historian apart from fragmentary evidence in sources upon which statements are built¹⁶¹. This is the confusion mentioned in Ankersmit’s phrasing. These so-called “Strong individuals”, are representations and must be respected as such. They are only individuated by all the statements they contain, given in the order meant by the writer. Representationally speaking, historians, with their whole texts, refer to nothing but their representations of historical subjects. Not the subjects themselves. The relation to what is represented is an aesthetic one. Not epistemological.

In NL, Ankersmit spends some effort in making a distinction between “narrative subjects” and “narrative substances” which parallels an extensional and intensional use of language or reference and meaning of narratives:

---from the narrative realist point of view it seems reasonable to say that the (narrative) subject of the narratio is formed by those proper names (e.g. “Napoleon”, “Bonaparte”) or those identifying descriptions that refer to this *historical* Napoleon. However, from the point of view of the narration or of narrative idealism, the individual statements of the narratio should be thought of as each contributing something to the “image” or “picture” of Napoleon’s life and times that his biographer wants to present to his public.¹⁶²

When a historian writes about “Napoleon”, according to Ankersmit, he is not writing about the same individual as all other historians working on the “Napoleon” of the past. The point is that since we are irretrievably out of direct touch with the past as it is (was), we cannot reach “Napoleon” but can only construct him in our minds using whatever cognitive tools at our disposal¹⁶³. Alternatively, and more precisely one could say that in Ankersmit’s view a

¹⁶⁰ HSI, 421. The same idea is put forth thirty years earlier in *Narrative Logic*, in which individuality as handled by early historicists is criticised: “...they [*the historicists*] were not prepared to abandon the notion of the ‘essence of socio-historical things’, because they needed it as their ‘subject of change’”. See p. 114 – 115.

¹⁶¹ See the distinction between “narrative realism” and “narrative idealism” in the introduction.

¹⁶² NL, 90.

¹⁶³ On one hand, references to constructivism are made: See *Narrative Logic* p. 81. On the other in *Historical Representation* chapter 2 it is suggested that precisely the subjectivity and ethical views of the historians enable her to flesh out something meaningful from the mass of raw data she is processing. Without this subjectivity, no meaning would result.

certain aspect of Napoleon, as perceived by the historian, is *re-presented* in a historical text. This is a view the later Ankersmit of representation would pronounce.¹⁶⁴ The bottom line is, that while Ankersmit believes that a connection with the past can be made – he denies this happens via constructed meaning¹⁶⁵. Epistemological construction of meaning will only give you the narrative substance just like the sense of perception will only give you the outlook of a painting. To get to the meaning of the painting, aesthetics is required.

But we must recall, that singular statements of a historical text may still be thought of as referring to some individual Napoleon Bonaparte that existed in the past. It is the whole text that cannot be said to refer or describe the past. It can merely present the Napoleon of the past in a certain light. Or more precisely, to again use Ankersmit's own terminology, present an *aspect* of the historical Napoleon. Many historians have the same facts to choose from in their representations of a certain part of the past. Still, they all come up with a different thesis about it. Ankersmit's "Copernican revolution" of historicism is then, roughly, the transfer of the ambivalent entelechies imagined by the early historicists from the past itself into the historians view of the past, where they become *strong individuals* in the Leibnizian sense¹⁶⁶. What this sense is exactly, will be partly explained in the next section. Cassirer and his interpretation on Leibniz's metaphysics and the notion of historical experience will be explored in the next chapter.

Intension: Historical Representations as Complete Concepts

On the basis of what has been said earlier, we already have some grasp of Leibniz's his metaphysics. But considering this paper it is important to get to the scholastic foundations on which Leibniz originally laid out his metaphysics. The following citation is from NL, chapter VI, where Ankersmit addresses the Leibnizian aspects of his theory:

¹⁶⁴ See *aspects*, in MTR p. 68 – 71.

¹⁶⁵ While not at the centre stage in this paper, Ankersmit's *Sublime Historical Experience* is a case for sublime experience as a tool for understanding the past. The point being that the past itself has meaning but grasp of such meaning precedes epistemological truth and reference, which confuse us as attempts to convert meaning to modern standards of knowledge are made by the experienter.

¹⁶⁶ MTR, 156. Here he refers with "Copernican revolution" to the jump from epistemological meaning to representational meaning.

---an insight into the nature of the statements on Nss can be gained more easily when it is recognized that Leibniz's theory of the proposition is admirably suited to describing them. Leibniz's central thesis is the so-called "predicate in notion principle"---¹⁶⁷

The "theory of the proposition" refers to what is commonly known as Leibniz's predicate-in-subject-principle. Something Ankersmit adopts to his own philosophy. It is also referred to as the conceptual containment theory of truth by Leibniz-scholarship, a fitting name since it well defines what truth was for Leibniz: Correctly recognising that some notions are contained in others, making it possible to state true proposition, in which identity is confirmed by seeing how a notion is included in another. The following citation defines the principle:

In every proposition, the predicate is said to be in the subject, that is, the notion of the predicate is contained in the notion of the subject. For, in a universal affirmative proposition, when I say "every man is an animal" I mean "the concept of animal is contained in the concept of man" (for the concept of man is to be a rational animal)¹⁶⁸.

In the *Discourse on Metaphysics* from 1686 Leibniz brings the principle to bear in metaphysics, describing how real *things* should be conceptualised. In §8 he states:

---we can say that the nature of an individual substance or of a complete being is to have a notion so complete that it is sufficient to contain and to allow us to deduce from it all the predicates of the subject to which this notion is attributed.¹⁶⁹

The principle is used here to define an individual substance. At this point, Leibniz had not yet come up with the fully idealistic world-view of the *Monadology*¹⁷⁰. Instead, he arguably had *substantial forms* in mind. Something in the lines of Aristotelian substance¹⁷¹. Whatever the case, already present here is the notion that substances are fully defined by nothing but their internal properties and that in theory all that an individual things have ever been or will be is deducible from the complete concepts of them.

Truth is further divided, in Leibniz, to two familiar categories: The analytical and contingent. The former is put forward in another principle, the *principle of contradiction*, and is

¹⁶⁷ NL, 130. Nss is short for narrative substances.

¹⁶⁸ Ariew & Garber, 11. Leibniz's sketch called *A Calculus of Consequences* from 1679. There are several other formulations of this in Leibniz's writings. Mates reports its appearance in Leibniz's *Théodicée* and many other texts. The importance of this doctrine to Leibniz cannot be denied as he applied it constantly in his philosophical writing as a basis of truth-functionality of propositions. Thus, it may also be called the conceptual containment theory of truth. In the *monadology* it appears implicitly as part of his theory of substance. For better explanations of the principle, see Adams, 57 – 62 or Garber, 184 – 185.

¹⁶⁹ Ariew & Garber, 41.

¹⁷⁰ See Daniel Garber: *Leibniz – Body, Substance, Monad*. Chapters 3 & 4. Alternatively, Hartz p. 1 – 2.

¹⁷¹ Robinson, section 2.2. Aristotelian primary substance is an individual thing that cannot be said to be an attribute of any further things. Aleksi Oja, for example. Things may be predicated of Aleksi but he cannot be predicated to other things.

characterised as identity. Simply put, propositions cannot be both false and true at the same time¹⁷². The principle is also seemingly trivially applied to substances. A thing cannot both be and not be, and it cannot both have and not have a property. A thing cannot be both actual and not actual, but it can be not actual and yet possible. Possibility is signalled in contingent truth is which defined by Leibniz's principle of sufficient reason. This principle states that whatever is true must have a reason for being true. Or whatever exists, exists for a reason (which only God fully knows). For example, it is not necessary that I write this paper. It is merely possible, or contingently true that I do so. In Leibniz's view on freedom¹⁷³, I am free to do as I please, but nevertheless I write this paper because I choose to do so in the best one of possible worlds, any of which God could have created.

In a text called *Primary Truths* Leibniz combines these “two great principles” with the principle of predicate-in-subject¹⁷⁴. Take any notion, be it the Pythagorean theorem or a cat that is on the table, and in the end a rigorous demonstration will show it to be analysable down to “primary truths” or what are also called “primitive concepts”. The predicate “is round” is a part of the notion of the circle and is thus contained in the subject. This is how we know that the proposition “the circle is round” is true. Similarly, the predicate “is married” belongs to the notion of husband and is therefore contained in the subject. With contingent propositions, somewhat surprisingly, the same applies.

When I think about the cat on the table, I attempt to summon the notion of that cat to mind and look for correspondence, not between facts and reality, but between the contents of my humanely confused concept of it and the complete notion of the cat itself. If I say, “the cat is on the table”, the proposition is true if at that time it is in the notion of the cat to be on the table. A chain of deduction for analysis of contingent truths is infinite, and only traversable by God, whom alone may deduce everything¹⁷⁵. A factor that makes later observers often accuse Leibniz of determinism (quite justly) is related to the notion that in the end, all knowledge is theoretically analytical in this view. The concept of contingency suits human needs and we require a posteriori knowledge to cope in the world, but it does not apply to

¹⁷² Mates, 153. For Leibniz's definitions, see Ariew & Garber p. 19, 217, 321.

¹⁷³ Adams, 3; Look 2013. There is an uncanny resemblance to 20th century modal logic dealing with possible worlds semantics.

¹⁷⁴ Ariew & Garber, 30 – 31.

¹⁷⁵ Original text, *On Contingency*, translated with notes in Ariew & Garber, 28. See also Adams p. 25 – 30.

Leibniz's all-perceiving God. So, metaphysically speaking, "being on the table at that time" is a property of the cat in our example. The predicate-in-subject-principle and that of sufficient reason justify, in later Leibniz, the claim that monadic substances are causally insulated.¹⁷⁶ All individual substances are defined only by their complete notions, and nothing outside themselves.

For Leibniz then, truth is not correspondence between propositions and states of affairs in the way it is often taken for granted by us. Instead, concepts are signs we assign to things. They express things and rigorous analysis of concepts is necessary to understand reality¹⁷⁷. What is required of *language* is simply not to obscure this mirroring process. The problem was that Leibniz knew of no language that could be used to perfectly express concepts and therefore concepts would often get lost when words are assigned to them¹⁷⁸. He devoted years of his life to the creation of a language that would avoid this problem, but though in retrospect his work was revolutionary, he eventually reduced the scope of the project and even then, never managed to get the results he wanted.¹⁷⁹ What has just been recollected, is the basis for what Raili Kauppi called Leibniz's *intensional logic*¹⁸⁰. When we'd speak the truth in Leibniz's envisioned *lingua philosophica*, we'd simply be figuring out the way things are through calculation. Philosophical debates would be about improper understanding of debaters over the concepts used by other parties. But, how is this realised in Ankersmit?

When Ankersmit first presented his Narrative Logic, his intent was to explain how an intensional logic following Leibniz's philosophy was needed to properly explain what it is that historians are writing about. Later he described a central thesis in his first book as follows:

The relationship obtaining between a monad or substance and its perceptions or experience is exactly the same as that between a historical representation and the statements from which it is constructed. This is why Leibniz's intensional logic is the kind of logic we need for understanding historical writing.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁶ Jolley 2005, 48 – 49; Mates, 85 – 86; Look, section 3.2.

¹⁷⁷ Adams, 67 – 71. Also see *Philosophy and Language in Leibniz*. In the article Donald Rutherford explores Leibniz's developing views about the relationship between reality and the mind and language.

¹⁷⁸ Think of the term "" and all the meanings we assign to it.

¹⁷⁹ See *Philosophy and Language in Leibniz* by Donald Rutherford; chapter 1 in Catherine Wilson's *Leibniz's Metaphysics*; or the biography of Leibniz by Maria Antognazza (where Leibniz's attempts at the creation of a logical calculus and universal language is a central theme continually returned to).

¹⁸⁰ Kauppi, 196. Also, xiii – xiv: Kauppi, in her dissertation investigated Leibniz's work in developing Aristotelian syllogisms and argued that Leibniz's main interest was in intensional logic (containment of concepts in concepts) and that he had had good reasons to believe that such a logic could be completed. It was this project that was, in a sense, continued by Frege in the 19th century in creating his *Begriffsschrift*. On this influence, see chapter 2 in Michael Beaney's *Frege: Making sense*.

¹⁸¹ Ankersmit 2003, 432. He never speaks of representation in NL, but the idea is there.

As was already expressed in the previous section, historical representations or texts about history are *strong individuals* and therefore complete concepts in the Leibnizian intensional sense. On another occasion, Ankersmit calls the historian's text a blind symbol or a sign, that is empty in meaning, until a meaning is given to it in a blind calculation of epistemological semantics¹⁸². This means that epistemologically the meaning can be said to be constructed from statements (i.e. the text is fully read by another historian). Its intension and not extension that's relevant when we read historical texts, since – as described in the previous section – description of the past per se is impossible.

Zelevák has described this distinction made by Ankersmit between the intension of narrative substances (complete concepts) and extension of statements in narratives by suggesting that there is an “empirical” and “conceptual” component to Ankersmit's logic of narratives. He calls the distinction made by Ankersmit the “fundamental difference thesis” and suggests eventually that while such a thesis is fruitful because it helps us guard against naively empirical accounts of the past, it also creates a problem:

--it is doubtful that the underdetermination present at the level of representation should suddenly disappear when we descend to the bottom level of its constituents. (Conversely, the opponents might question where the underdetermination comes from if we build the representation from the statements strictly determined by the facts they describe.)¹⁸³

Referring to several critiques of Ankersmit's work, Zelevák suggests that the problem is resolvable if the historical representation were thought of as “a whole produced by the interplay of factual and conceptual elements”¹⁸⁴. It is suggested that Ankersmit is drawing an unnecessary semantic gap between the statement and the text. Essentially this idea is carried over from modern intensional logic. Gottlob Frege's most famous text, *On Sense and Reference*, distinguishes between the reference of a proper name and its sense. The former being the object in reality denoted by it and the latter what thought the proper name expresses. For example, “the Morning Star” and “the Evening Star” both denote the planet Venus, but still mean different things and telling an ignorant person that the Morning Star is the Evening Star will be a revelation, that could not occur if one tells him that Venus is

¹⁸² WEM, 13.

¹⁸³ Zelevák, 2009, 367.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

Venus.¹⁸⁵ The same proper name can then have many senses and the same is true of sentences. For example, Michael Beaney's reading of Frege's logic suggests that a large unit of language such as a historical text would in Fregean intensional logic have a sense that is a function of all the senses of the statements contained by the text arranged in a particular way.¹⁸⁶ In a later text Zeleňák describes Ankersmit's notion of historical representation as similar to this mentioned Fregean concept of sense¹⁸⁷. He backs down however, surmising that Ankersmit claims his theory is an argument for the connection between historical reality and the writing of history instead of being merely a formal account for historical language.

Considering that this paper is about Ankersmit's Leibnizianism it might be surprising then that here it is actually Frege (or Zeleňák) who is Leibnizian as far as the *characteristica universalis*, or Leibniz's ideas about intensional logic are concerned. But here one must remember the distinction made by Ankersmit between historical research and historical texts as representations¹⁸⁸. Ankersmit has never denied the applicability of such a logic or any variant of it in the work of historians as far as what he means by "historical research" is concerned. And, in this sense, he is never actually in conflict with contemporary logic. In fact, he never denies anyone from thinking about text just as Frege or Zeleňák do. His interest is turned towards *how historical language is oriented towards the past*.

In NL, an analogy is drawn between the universe of Leibniz's monads and that of narrative substances. This analogy is the useful fiction of the "narrativist universe". He encourages the reader to imagine a fictional universe where instead of spatial dimensions in y-, x- and z-axes you'd have infinite dimensions in possible true statements. Figuratively, one can imagine all possible narrative substances to be part of this universe. A narrative substance is then a sequenced "activation" of some of these infinite possible statements. And there can be no

¹⁸⁵ Frege, 1892.

¹⁸⁶ Beaney, 155 – 165. Of secondary interest here is the fact that Frege cited Leibniz's *characteristica universalis* as a major inspiration for his own logical work in the preface of *Begriffsschrift* (p. 6 – 7). Both Frege and Leibniz had the aim of providing science a tool in a logical language that would enable the users of this language to not only as a means of communication, but also as a method of discovery and proof. In the introduction I brought up the issue of Leibniz's nominalism and it is noteworthy that just as Leibniz thought of concepts as dispositions of the mind to think about things, so are Fregean senses modes of presentation for things. Both Frege and Leibniz approached language, in their respective *universal languages* as conceptual constructs that could always be logically broken down to their constituents. Leibniz referred to these as *primitive concepts* to which all complete concepts should be reducible (See Leibniz's essay *Meditations on Knowledge, Truth and Ideas* in Ariew & Garber p. 24).

¹⁸⁷ Zeleňák 2010.

¹⁸⁸ See p. 19.

disparity between intension and extension here since there just is nothing to extend to. A text is referred to when all the statements are activated and there is no meaning in a constructed sense. Texts of course commonsensically have meaning for us, but they do not in the narrative universe, where they are just sequenced arrays of statements.¹⁸⁹ As it is with Leibniz's monads, you can't go outside. There is no meaning outside. Yet both the Monadology and narrative logic are theories about the noumenal and therefore do this "going outside". This results in all narratives or historical representations essentially being "meaningless signs".

While all this is coherent and nothing prevents us from seeing in this a description of what texts are and why they are individuals, the question arises about how helpful this really is? The answer is that it's not supposed to be helpful, since it's just an elaboration for what historical texts are. He later brings up metaphor in chapter VII and argues for an irrefutable role of the metaphorical capacity of (natural) historical language for laying out the historian's theses. He also brings up aesthetics in chapter VIII to explain that we rely on it when deciding what kind of a text we present to our audiences¹⁹⁰. This, along with his alignment with postmodernism in relation to text (though not the statement) invited trouble for him, which probably inspired him to reformulate his theory further towards its current form as representational. Opponents like Paul Roth, on the other hand, have argued that Ankersmit's insistence on the special status of historical language creates unnecessary complications (in requiring a separate logic of texts and creating the semantic gap) and rewards one with nothing that has application¹⁹¹.

And to make an account of this, he need not Leibniz's logic as put forth in his logical calculus, but his metaphysics as I have been interpreting it at the first part of this chapter. And here the notions of conscious experience and subjectivity, in the Leibnizian sense of the Monadology, are central. While intensionality of language can be useful in explaining how whole texts are constituted semantically, this is not Ankersmit's project. His semantics of historiography aim at a more fundamental problem as an account for how the past that manifests to the historian and subsequently is represented by the historian in a process that

¹⁸⁹ NL, 138.

¹⁹⁰ NL, 228. Here he pronounces Huizinga's account of the historian's "aesthetic grasp of the past". Later in SHE a chapter is devoted to Huizinga and he elaborates historical experience and Huizinga's ideas better.

¹⁹¹ Roth, Paul 2013. *Whistling history*.

can only be described with an aesthetic approach due to the metaphorical nature of the historian's language. But these are issues for the next chapter.

Now, considering what has been said about complete concepts and colligation in historiography¹⁹², one could argue that Ankersmit must be wrong here. Following *Frege's* "Leibnizian vision" one could claim that meaning of historical texts is logically nothing more but the function of the arranged meanings of the statements¹⁹³. It should theoretically then be possible to reduce the meanings of texts to a formal setting that could be laid out in a logical language. The metaphorical nature of historical language would disappear, and the intended meanings of historians would be accessible to readers. This idea is of course utopian, since no human mind could be expected to consciously process a history-book from cover to cover using such language to arrive at the exact intended meaning or *Sinn*, to use the Fregean term. However, one could still argue, as Paul Roth (2013) And John Zammito (2005) have, that Ankersmit is creating an unnecessary complication to language by demanding that historiography be allocated to the realm of representational logic. It might be said that there is no gap between textual meaning and the meaning of statements, but rather that there is an incredibly long distance from a bunch of the latter to the former.

However, there is a misinterpretation underlying all this. To see what this misinterpretation is, the distinction made by Ankersmit between historical research and history-writing must be maintained. Ankersmit can actually claim to be Leibnizian in both these domains. He has on many occasions said that theorising and different logic have nothing to do with how representation is realised¹⁹⁴. Therefore, the logic of history-writing must be dealt with separately, namely because it is about the thesis of the historian's work, or the *aspect of the past* represented by the text. As such, it belongs to the realm of the sublime experience and is subjective.

At the same time, it is the only way to connect with past reality. The idea of history-writing as representation is needed by Ankersmit because historians are thought by him to *substitute* their thesis of the past with a text¹⁹⁵. Historians bring forth their vision with texts that – like

¹⁹² See p. 24.

¹⁹³ Beaney, 155 – 165.

¹⁹⁴ NL, 29; WEM, 5 & 15. In the latter reference, logic in its conventional definition is told to be irrelevant for someone facing a representation.

¹⁹⁵ WEM, 6 – 7; HR, part 8.

pieces of art – attempt to bring forth a certain *aspect* of the past that is deemed important. In such a representation, parts simply have no meaning. Only when the viewer sees the whole is the intended effect achieved.

Ankersmit is not particularly interested in the way language operates in historical research and that is why this matter usually avoided once the distinction between statements and whole texts as representations has been made. He encourages anyone approaching the logic of history-writing on the level of statement to apply any logical approach one likes.¹⁹⁶ This is why he argues for the double-function of statements in historical texts¹⁹⁷. We must keep repeating that his intent is to argue that the historical text *as a whole* is what is central when describing how history as an academic discipline operates. His theory presents a logic that treats whole texts as representations of the historian's vision of the past. The analogy drawn to the monad helps both to explain that Leibniz's intentional logic forbids the breaking down of texts and see that whole texts as representations *substitute* the historian's personal vision of the past. It is a linguistic manifestation of what the historian experienced. This notion of experience will be explored next.

¹⁹⁶ NL, 29; WEM,

¹⁹⁷ See p. 20 onwards.

II - Substance: Experience, function and representation

Ankersmit's claims of Leibnizianism most significantly refer to his appliance of Leibniz's metaphysics and his substance theory as it appears in the *Monadology*. The *Monadology*, in our interpretation so far, is the answer to the problem of what is noumenal. And this answer is the monads. The monads are perception and their synchronised infinite totality is all there is to noumenal reality. But we must recall that individually, for the monads themselves, what is noumenal is *experience*. We will here see what this amounts to in the context of Ankersmit's transposing the idea to philosophy of history.

In chapter V of NL, it is stated: "As will become clear in the course of this study, Leibniz's use of the concept of substance or monad is most easily adaptable to the narrativist philosophy advocated here". The exact theorems from the *Monadology* applied in narrative logic are 1 – 9, 11, 12, 18, 38, 47, 51, 57, 58 and 61¹⁹⁸. Of these, theorems up to 12 describe the indivisibility and individuality of substance and its nature as what Ankersmit later calls a *strong individual*. As explained in the previous chapter, the *monadology* through these theorems helps define narrative substances as intensional entities that are defined by nothing outside themselves. § 18 describes the monad as an entelechy, that is, an individual entity that is the source of its own actions. Theorems 38, 47, 51, 58 and 61 are, I believe, more related to the historian's relationship with the past and to the application of narrative logic and therefore we will return to them in the next chapter where I see these theorems as a master key to Ankersmit's application of Leibniz's metaphysics in explaining how objectivity works in the discipline of history and what historians do in their work when looked at from Ankersmit's proposed paradigm. I have included in this work a body of these chosen theorems, to help the reader stay on board. (See attachment I)

In this chapter, of more interest will be theorems 14 – 17, which are not featured in NL, but become of interest later as Ankersmit connects Leibnizian substance with perception and experience. Ankersmit seems to have expanded his Leibnizian vision. This, he claims, followed from his terminological transition from "narrative substance" to "representation"¹⁹⁹. He

¹⁹⁸ NL, 94f.

¹⁹⁹ SHE, xvii. He cites Danto as an influence.

began to pronounce the representationalist aspect of Leibniz's metaphysics. Ankersmit's historical representation is divided into what is represented in this interpretation he follows Cassirer, since the latter was apparently among the first to give an application to the Monadology in both philosophy of science and the humanities²⁰⁰. I admit the distinction between the notions of what the historian does and how objectivity is realised in historiography is not clear cut. Once you explain one you explain the other, because both are based on the same Leibnizian idea, namely that we are dealing with (conscious) perception about the past.

The first part in this chapter will focus on historical experience and explore the development and meaning of this concept. My argument is that when it comes to historical experience, Ankersmit is applying the Monadology as an explanation to what is noumenal for the monad, which is analogous to the historian, who creates points of view to the past by experiencing them. These experiences have qualities that are irreducible to epistemology. Historical experience and the sublime make up *historical ontology*. Historical experience is closely related to representation, because what we try to represent in history-writing is how (or as what) the past emerges in our consciousness. The continuance from experience to representation is difficult to discern. This is because, as with Cassirer's symbolic forms, a crucial point is that existing representations define what form consciousness takes and on the other hand, conscious experience defines what our representations are of. Therefore, there will be overlap in between the two sections of this chapter.

The second part, as one would expect, will the elaborate the notion of historical representation and explain what is Leibnizian about it. It is introduced by Ankersmit as an analogy between the monad and Ankersmit's narrative substance or what he later called the *presented* of a historical representation. With this analogy, it is argued by Ankersmit that these representations bring forth the historian's conscious perception of the past by providing a point of view into the past. In NL, he writes:

We should understand historicism not as a philosophy on *things* in the past, but on their (narrative) *description*; and as we know the past from only descriptions of it, it is not surprising that it was easy for the historians to confuse the two²⁰¹.

²⁰⁰ See previous chapter p. 37 – 38.

²⁰¹ NL, 186.

And yet *things are* what Ankersmit's narrative logic comes down to. Things postulated in Ankersmit's representational system by a Leibnizian analogy between the monad and *narrative substance*, which are said to exist somewhere between language and historical reality as we commonly understand it²⁰² This may sound strange because of Ankersmit's way of understanding thinghood in the Leibnizian way. And as he himself writes: "One should never forget that these "images" or "pictures" – narrative substances, as we shall call them – are *things*, not *concepts*". And one might replace *thing* here, with monad to see where we are going. I will argue that while essentially the same, Ankersmit's interpretation of this thinghood develops through the years, as he begins to see experience as more important in historical representation.

Historical Experience

Historical language can mean two things for Ankersmit. Firstly, it is the language of *historical research*. In historical research the historian describes the past objectively. The past is the reality and one needs to remind oneself here that one's subjectivity in biases and emotions can affect the description. One must extinguish the phenomenal to get to the noumenal, just as historicists like Ranke wished to erase themselves from their work. On the other hand, and more importantly, historical language is not language in the conventional sense, but representation. In Ankersmit's system, the whole text is a representation that stands in for historical reality that does not exist in the past in a similar fashion to how it did in *historical research*. Here what is noumenal is the represented and all attempts to analyse this (reduce it to something else) will be phenomenal. In MTR, the represented is an *aspect of the past*, which is not the past, but simply a point of view into a specific historical subject or perhaps an attempt to combine multiple subjects into a coherent whole²⁰³. In SHE, it is written about in terms of *historical experience*. I suggest that it is helpful for our understanding of Ankersmit

²⁰² NL, 111.

²⁰³ MTR, 71 – 72. When you think of Napoleon, it's relatively easy to see that there is the real historical subject, *Napoleon*, and then there's our personal experience of him. Our "images" or "visions" of him. But when it comes to more abstract things like the industrialisation, we see that it's actually very difficult to connect this aspect of the past with anything particular. However, Ankersmit insists that this is no problem for *representation*, the way it would be for epistemology. Representation begins with the denial of narrative realism and therefore there is nothing to represent in the past – as understood in historical research – to begin with. What is represented is in the historian him- or herself and therein is noumenal historical reality.

to see these dimensions of the noumenal and phenomenal follow from an analogous relationship between the theories of historical experience and the monadology.

Though few seem to have noticed it, the notion of conscious experience has been present in Ankersmit's work all along, though it only becomes well-defined 1994 with the last part of *History and Tropology*, where Ankersmit writes about the "phenomenology of historical experience". He gave a more thorough account in *Sublime Historical Experience* in 2005. NL is a book on the logic of historical texts, and it deals with the notion of experience only so far as to posit it as a fundamental logical entity that is essential to *history-writing*. It deliberately deals only with texts as *the* form of historical representation²⁰⁴. Narrative substance is said to refer "exclusively to *narrative interpretations* of the past"²⁰⁵. It seems that he still identified strongly at this point with narrativism and tended to focus on language, despite considering experience in a limited way. In later work, Ankersmit clearly states that historical representation is not limited to linguistic expression alone. As the following citation implies, he thinks representation is achieved in other mediums besides language as we commonly know it:

Admittedly, HR's consist of linguistic entities, but the import of that fact dwindles to irrelevance against the far more crucial fact that HR's are strong individuals and belong, as such, to a regime different from that ruling the linguistic entities being their properties.²⁰⁶

What is represented by historical representation is not linguistic. It is merely that historical representations as we commonly think of them – texts – are. Therefore, I will reformulate what I just stated like this: Experience is a fundamental logical entity that is essential to the *representation* of history. Representation includes narrative but not the other way around. This distinction is important, and I shall return to it later in the chapter when addressing aesthetics. Now that this is out of the way, let us proceed to how Ankersmit has approached the notion of experience. In NL, Ankersmit writes about the concept of self-identity, proposing it as the logical condition for historical experience. The identity of an individual person is described as something defined either externally or internally. The externalist definition of *my* identity – Ankersmit calls this the *personal identity* – could be something like "Aleksi Oja is x, y and z" where x, y and z denote properties that help us identify Aleksi Oja among other

²⁰⁴ NL, 11.

²⁰⁵ NL, 94. My cursive.

²⁰⁶ HSI, 417. HR's being historical representations.

quantifiable objects. The difficulty here is that one is defining identity circularly by addressing it as an identity. And since history is about *change* in things, how does one define *a subject of change* in this way? Ankersmit begins his elaboration of internal self-identity (I_{int}) by saying that “there is a peculiar ‘unity of perception and/or feeling’ that pervades all our successive experiences and states of consciousness”²⁰⁷. Experience and consciousness are obviously of importance here. The last section of chapter VI in NL deals with this “ I_{int} ” followingly:

The concept of selfidentity denotes the uniqueness and the unity that characterizes and pervades all my experiences; it is the logical entity that, somehow, ensures that all *my* experiences and states of consciousness are really mine and not either partly or totally somebody else’s. Thanks to this logical entity, i.e. the concept ‘ I_{int} ’, all the experiences I *come* to see as my experiences are effectively attributed to *me*, whatever these experiences may have been or will be. In other words, “‘ I_{int} ’ is the logical entity required for the possibility of describing the (historical) change I undergo during (phases of) my life.”²⁰⁸

We all internally and logically think of ourselves as subjects of experience, and this does not prevent us from thinking of ourselves also abstractly as objects with properties. There are two separate logical realms here, so to speak. The self has extension and intension. The sentence “ I_{ext} am a” refers to the individual called Aleksi Oja and a denotes a property of that individual. But “ I_{int} am a” refers to a narrative substance that I use to represent myself. Ankersmit continues:

The unity of *this* Ns “ I_{int} ” explains the intuition of continuity we associate with the stream of our experiences, states of consciousness and so on. Individual statements on my experiences can be derived analytically from the complete notion of “ I_{int} ”, whatever these experiences have been or will be. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that the Ns “ I_{int} ” refers to a history I have constructed on myself.²⁰⁹

I_{int} is the subject of change that constitutes the historian’s consciousness. It must be thought of as a narrative substance itself. Committing to historicism, Ankersmit retains this central tenet – that a thing is defined by its history – at the root of narrative logic. We must think of narrative substances as entities that are formally modelled after I_{int} . We can construct the histories of other things after a realisation about the historicity of our self-identity. This does not, however, suggest that personal experiences should be projected onto past subjects in an attempt to arrive at some conclusions (as they are in hermeneuticism) but only that self-identity as defined here – a narrative of our consecutive experiences – is the model for

²⁰⁷ NL 168.

²⁰⁸ NL, 168.

²⁰⁹ NL, 169.

history-writing or historical representation. We think of some narrative of the past as tragic and this mood may shadow the narrative in a similar way that a person may reflect his own life as tragic. Consciousness has form that is defined by all the previous forms it had. A personal history in the form of a narrative is used in defining the self, and this acts as a model for other narrativization as well, complete with experience:

That we are aware of having a history ourselves (selfidentity) is the logical prerequisite for all writing of history, that is, for our ability to discern “identities” (or Nss) and, possibly, at some later stage, “individualities” (i.e. intensional types of Nss) in external historical reality.²¹⁰

Int is what provides us with the formal framework for how to understand history. In later writing he states, that: *HR’s are not models of past reality, but past reality is a model of HR’s*²¹¹. This means that good representations will make those who behold them experience reality in a different way and here we are already touching upon the supposed “application part” of Ankersmit’s logic²¹². The model given in a representation is, however a mere proposal and it is the closest we ever get to the past, since Ankersmit thinks that it is absurd to assume the past exists somehow to be discovered²¹³. While epistemologically speaking we are of course making the attempt at forming a model of the past, the separation between the past and the present prevents us from saying that such models approach truth. This is the gap between science and history and from here we can see how the latter may even subsume the former, while the reverse will not do. In “narrative idealism” the strong individuals mentioned in the previous chapter function as a way of understanding past reality.

Like Cassirer’s symbolic forms, which are in his theory our ways of making sense of reality, these strong individuals are ways of making sense of the past. And just as symbolic forms constitute reality, historical representation gives us historical reality in the a new represented when we reflect on all the representations that we have available to us. There is a two-way motion to be discerned here. such strong individuals are irreducible to anything else, but they may be represented in symbols. Strictly speaking neither symbolic forms or representeds can be observed, because they rather are the observing. Holding a history-book in one’s hand and looking at the writing on the pages, this initially sounds absurd. But having freshly read the

²¹⁰ NL, 176.

²¹¹ HSI, 416. And essentially the same is stated in Ankersmit 2014, p. 120: “If representationalist meaning is essentially relationalist, HR’s are not models of past reality but past reality a model of the relevant HR’s”.

²¹² This point is also made in *Political Representation* p. 196.

²¹³ Recall the distinction between “narrative realism” and “narrative idealism”.

(hopefully well-written) book and dwelling on a possible sense of discovery, one may come to a different conclusion.

Here is where Leibniz enters the picture once more. Before SHE was published, Ankersmit wrote of how Leibniz had affected what he was about to elaborate in that book:

But a quite different story may also be told about Leibniz. For one might also argue that a monad's or a substance's perceptions are, in fact, its experiences.²¹⁴

---in fact, there is nothing outside experience in Leibniz's monadology. Leibniz gives us *experience without a subject of experience* – and this is what we need from the perspective of the sublime, since the weight of a subject of experience preceding experience will inevitably destroy the sublime by forcing it willy-nilly in the history of the subject and by 'domesticating' it as a mere part of this history²¹⁵.

The first citation confirms what I suspected was his interpretation of Leibniz and he is clearly referring to the previously ignored § 14 in the *Monadology*: "The passing state that incorporates and represents a multitude within a unity—i.e. within the simple substance— is nothing but what we call perception"²¹⁶. I agree with Ankersmit's interpretation, though he does take some liberties here, since not all monads but clearly only some are thought by Leibniz to have conscious experience²¹⁷. However, as said, he does not cite the use of this theorem in NL. And he never explicitly singles them out thereafter. The second citation follows Cassirer's interpretation of Leibniz's metaphysics (and that, I suspect, of Mahnke, though I have never read him). Experience is not subjective or objective, as these categories belong to the realm of symbolic forms, which come after experience. Cassirer states in the first volume of his *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, that he "seeks the categories of the consciousness of objects in the theoretical, intellectual sphere, and starts from the assumption that such categories must be at work wherever a cosmos, a characteristic and typical world view, takes form out of the chaos of impressions"²¹⁸. What there fundamentally and nominally is, is pure experience. We should note that a problem follows from this: If experience is all there nominally is and categories such as temporality (*preceding experience*)

²¹⁴ Ankersmit 2013, *Invitation to Historians* p. 431.

²¹⁵ Ankersmit 2013, *Invitation to Historians* p. 431.

²¹⁶ Bennett, Jonathan 2017: *The Principles of Philosophy known as Monadology*. Orig. text by G. W. Leibniz. §14.

²¹⁷ Leibniz continues in §14: "---the Cartesians failed badly, entirely discounting perceptions whose owners were not aware of them. That made them think that the only monads are minds, which led them to deny that animals have souls because those would be simple substances below the level of minds".

²¹⁸ Cassirer 1955, 29.

is rejected, the pre-established harmony that Leibniz is arguing for, shatters²¹⁹. This “Leibnizian dilemma”, as Ankersmit calls it, is better dealt with later as we move from experience to the notion of representation.

In the meantime, we will address another objection that could be made by reminding Ankersmit about Leibniz’s commitment to metaphysical plurality. His main problem with Spinoza was that the latter proposed in his *Ethics* that phenomenal things are nothing more than the modes of God as the one substance. It would seem that with the sublime we might end up with Spinoza instead of Leibniz. Ankersmit has confessed that in his ideas about the notion of the sublime he is in debt to Hegel, who, in Ankersmit’s own words saw in Spinoza saw a champion against Kantian transcendentalism²²⁰. From this point of view, defending the idea Ankersmit is Leibnizian “through and through” becomes more difficult. While Leibniz certainly takes experience seriously, it is not obvious that he goes beyond the subject to the concept of sublime. There is at least one way to argue this however, and I will deal with it in the last section of this chapter. An answer to this, I believe, would be to remind the presenter of the objection about the distinction made between representation and experience. The plurality of the monads is crucial if we are to make narrative logic work. But with experience, we are dealing only with a single point of view and a single aspect of the universe, and therefore the question of plurality becomes irrelevant.

NL brushes on experience, but it does not dwell on it and therefore I find it plausible to claim that the historical experience he later came to pronounce was not yet developed. I believe Ankersmit only later began to reflect on this level of historical ontology more. This is because if I_{int} is a narrative substance, it cannot be the represented, but is the form of representation. Though Leibniz is featured thoroughly in the book (recall the list of theorems on page 43) Ankersmit never refers to the theorems in the monadology that would have allowed him to argue for the claims made in the two citations above. These would have been § 14 – 17, 19 – 20, where Leibniz brings up the notions that monads are perception guided by the force of appetite and that a soul or a mind is a simple substance. Jonathan Menezes has suggested that what prompted Ankersmit to pronounce the notion of experience was a brief “moment

²¹⁹ For example, in § 22 of the *Monadology*: “And every momentary state of a simple substance is a natural consequence of its immediately preceding one, so that the present is pregnant with the future”. Bennett, Jonathan 2017: *The Principles of Philosophy known as Monadology*. Orig. text by G. W. Leibniz

²²⁰ HSI, 423.

of postmodernism” during the 80’s that made him aware of a hole in his philosophy that may be interpreted as making it lose touch with the past completely²²¹. Menezes makes an acute and important observation in that during the 1980’s it was not altogether clear yet what “postmodernism” meant or how it could be defined²²². In HT, Ankersmit already makes a distinction between postmodernism and historicism in how the latter in the work of Meinecke and Huizinga applies the notions of “nostalgia” and experience. On postmodernism he notes:

One of the criticisms we may justifiably make of postmodernism is that it focuses so much on textual presentation and feels so little inclined to consider closely modernist accounts of the experiential basis for what is expressed and presented by the (historical) text²²³.

And with “experiential basis” he means not only empirical experience but also “nostalgic experience”. Such an experience always contains an emotional content that transfers to the greatest of historical writings²²⁴. Ankersmit writes that “by consistently upholding the unattainability of the past, [nostalgic experience] respects the distance or difference that is necessary for the possibility of historical experience”²²⁵. Bryan Cartledge has written a book about the history of Hungary titled “The Will to Survive”, from the name alone it is clear that a sense of nostalgia inspired the writer and it could be said that the historian had a commitment to the past event in this region and its people accompanied by a historical experience as described by Ankersmit²²⁶.

Here we are approaching the themes of *Sublime Historical Experience*, in which the namesake of the book is how Ankersmit explains how we are in touch with the past. He takes after Edmund Burke’s and Kant’s notions of the sublime, which blur seemingly contradictory emotions (such as pleasure and pain) together, and notes that both these philosophers had to turn against their own epistemological views to account for this aesthetic category that is based on experience²²⁷. With his interpretation of Leibniz, he takes this further and merges the subject and the object in his category of sublime historical experience, which makes epistemology secondary to experience. What is interesting is that neither in SHE or in

²²¹ Menezes, 20.

²²² Menezes, 5 – 6.

²²³ HT, 195.

²²⁴ HT, 204 – 205.

²²⁵ HT, 200.

²²⁶ Cartledge, Bryan 2006: *The Will to Survive – a History of Hungary*. Timewell press, London UK.

²²⁷ Moskalewicz, 253.

discussing his inspiration to this notion, after SHE was published, he no longer mentions Leibniz as a direct inspiration, though he does bring up Aristotle's *de Anima*, in which a theory of the soul that inspired Leibniz is present²²⁸. It seems inconceivable that he would drop the idea of Leibniz's going beyond the subject and object in experience, considering his previous ideas in 2003 and the fact that he claims Leibniz to be his most important inspiration. Perhaps the reason is that the subject and object are never explicitly disposed of in Leibniz's work. This only occurs in the *Monadology* if one interprets the monad as a function the way Cassirer does. What is interesting though is that Leibniz's mathematical notions of function and calculus are connected to the notion of the sublime in SHE²²⁹. This is something we will return to when addressing these notions in the next chapter.

While historical experience is preconditioned by all our previous epistemologically conceived categories such as the subject and the object or nation-states or species – these are what facilitate the experience and make change possible. Without professionalised historical research and formerly established accepted ways of reporting one's findings there would be no possibility of historical experience²³⁰. But historical experience is nevertheless something that has the power to transform these very categories that guide historical research and the writing of history:

The sublime or traumatic experience has a *directness* absent from "normal" experience since we must undergo it without the protective mediation of the cognitive and psychological apparatus that normally processes our experience. But on the other hand it is abnormally *indirect* since we cannot face this directness and, precisely because of this, dissociate ourselves from it and thus remain, in a way, external to it.²³¹

Trauma goes with the sublime and it shatters previous ways of *seeing the past as something*²³². It makes the past by making it distinct from the present way of thinking. I personally find it difficult to make a distinction between mere subjective experience and the sublime variant. In an interview, Ankersmit says that the basic form of historical experience is the sublime one. It collectively changes us by making us aware of the gap between the past and present. Think of the French revolution, the black death, world war II and the holocaust.

²²⁸ Moskalewicz, 254. In SHE, this is mentioned on p. 339.

²²⁹ SHE, 175.

²³⁰ SHE, 173.

²³¹ SHE 336.

²³² In NL it is said that narratives are metaphorical proposals that, as wholes, persuade readers to think of the past metaphorically "as something" instead of merely describing it. See p. 82 – 86, 191 – 201.

These kinds of events cause a traumatic and sublime experience that will not fail to make us aware of how we *used to think* and forcibly move us into a new way of experiencing reality, with no way back but in memory, and effigy²³³. I suppose Ankersmit would say that grand historical narratives concern such events and are only attempted by the most ambitious of writers that attempt give an account of the past to reveal something insightful and important about ourselves as human beings. But of course, much of history is written about era's long gone, that were devoid of such cataclysmic events. Change may be subtle and historical experience may be hard to come by. But sensitive individuals may still be overcome by the sublime in even fairly mundane circumstances, such as glancing at an old engraving, that makes one realise the vast distance between the past and the present. Ankersmit sees in Huizinga someone who wrote history based on this sort of experience²³⁴.

Yet all historical texts have are representations and are based in the historian's experience of the past. Of course, smaller works in history – say – undergraduate papers would not be about such matters but rather report some humble findings about a small archive or perhaps letters written by some somehow significant person who has passed away. Can we really say that such texts are new representations of the past, formed through sublime experience? Ankersmit could have two answers here: Firstly, he would note that most history today, especially undergraduate works, have a heavy emphasis on historical research at the cost of historical writing. They tend to give lots of facts based on sources and claim little, and this is to be expected from inexperienced writers practicing historical research. Additionally, he could say that these papers nevertheless do pick and order facts with the purpose of giving a thesis, which may indeed present the reader (and the writer) with a thesis that is based on a genuine historical experience, and which might change the readers ways of seeing the past.

Another important aspect about historical experience that Ankersmit pronounces is the qualitative emotional content of experience. Sublime and trauma go hand in hand. He refers to Otto Bollnow's notion of "Stimmung", or "moods and feelings" as Ankermsit translated it, describing it as the "color of all our experience" as opposed to the empirical form of it²³⁵. The same could be restated to anglo-saxon audiences more accessibly, I believe, through the

²³³ Moskalewicz, 258 – 259. Also see Chapter 8 in SHE.

²³⁴ SHE, 125 – 126.

²³⁵ SHE, 307.

concept of qualia, or the qualitative aspects of experience irreducible with the terminology and methods of natural sciences²³⁶. Qualia describe how there is *something it is like* to experience, say colour, fear, or sound. We distinguish between different qualia and can connect them with the senses but there is no way to explain why a sound should have the *raw feel* of sound and seeing colour should qualitatively *feel like* seeing colour.

Frank Jackson's famous knowledge argument "Mary's room" features a scientist, Mary, who has devoted her life to the scientific study of colour²³⁷. The thing is, she has never experienced colour personally, having spent her entire life in a black and white room. Once she is let out and presented a red rose, it's persuasive to think that she learns something new about colour by getting a first taste of the quality of colour. This is not what Ankersmit is claiming per se, because qualia such as the unquantifiable experience of colour is related to objects. And mood as Ankersmit refers to it is something more persistent and basic. Trying qualitative raw feels like "melancholy" or "irony" would probably get one closer to it.

While the point Ankersmit makes in SHE is primarily meant for philosophers of history, he is also encouraging historians to embrace "moods and feelings" instead of removing them from their writing²³⁸. In PR, he states that "representations are, essentially, metaphorical proposals for how to see or to perceive a certain part of reality"²³⁹. Thus. they should increase our options in making the choice in "seeing as". (Though in case of *sublime* experience there is no choice, but our way of seeing the past is forcibly transformed.) Similarly, in HR, it is stated that a crucial function of history-writing is that it provides us ways of deciding between good and bad political or moral values²⁴⁰. While one can argue that this needs not involve emotion, but mere reason suffices, we might answer that in Ankersmit's notion of the historical experience the emotional cannot be separated from whole of experience that acts as the basis for reason. For Ankersmit subjectivity and the historian's moral opinions are what make history meaningful and the same is true in political representation. Without the subjective element, historiography would never be able to fulfil its important function of making

²³⁶ See e.g. *The Conscious Mind* p. 4 – 6. by David J. Chalmers. Chalmers' focus is on the mind-body problem and he uses the term *qualitative feel*.

²³⁷ Jackson, Frank 1982: *Epiphenomenal Qualia*. *Philosophical Quarterly*. 32 (127): 127–136.

²³⁸ Moskalewicz, 256.

²³⁹ PR, 228 – 229.

²⁴⁰ HR, 99 – 100.

history.²⁴¹ And as an important addition, subjectivity is not merely morality. Ankersmit's view is that aesthetics is of equal, if not greater importance: "Indeed, aesthetic preferences, stylistic habits, lack of imagination or congeniality with a certain subject matter or just sheer incompetence may also make an author's historiography 'subjective'".²⁴² Here another connection can be established between Cassirer and Ankersmit, as the former saw the emotional and aesthetic content of history-writing as important. In the chapter about history, in *Essay on Man* he compares it to poetry, while keeping the notions separate:

Poetry is not a mere imitation of nature; history is not a narration of dead facts and events. History as well as poetry is an organon of our self-knowledge, an indispensable instrument for building up our human universe.²⁴³

Cassirer and Ankersmit both see a strong affinity between art and history and describe both as important ways of gaining knowledge about ourselves. I am hesitant to declare what exactly separates these two thinkers (and this is a matter of my own lack of knowledge) but it is clear that Ankersmit focuses on philosophy of history specifically and argues for its importance in his theory of representation. As far as I understand Cassirer, he did not think that there was a world beyond symbolic forms we have access to. And here he is similar to Ankersmit as far as historical experience and historical representation go. As far as representations or symbolic forms go, there is no reality beyond them. However, Ankersmit also moves on the level of historical research and therefore one can not say of his philosophy as a whole that he denies there is a reality beyond representations. Another difference is that Cassirer does not (I think) differentiate as clearly between the two movements that take place between historical representation and historical experience. Both help constitute the other in Ankersmit, whereas in Cassirer, it seems, is committed to a narrower interpretation and application of the Leibnizian monad. One symbolic form proceeds to another and as far as I know he does not define objectivity and subjectivity as Ankersmit does. A matter for the next chapter both through the concept of function and the objectivity-subjectivity dichotomy. These things are related.

I think Ankersmit's ambitions demand him to see a two-way road between the experience and representation. On the one hand, sublime experience changes us. On the other historical

²⁴¹ Chapter 2, *In Praise of Subjectivity* makes this point.

²⁴² NL, 214 – 215.

²⁴³ Cassirer 1945, 260.

representation enables us to change reality by creating representations about our experiences. Cassirer does not speak of representations but is more interested generally in theory, language, and myth. Ankersmit writes in SHE: “---we have, with the sublime a philosophical category legitimating the question of how to conceive of this apparently impossible creative interaction of narrative and experience”. He pronounces sublime *experience* and its *re-presentation* instead of symbolic *form*. He seems to put more weight on creativity and metaphor as our means of affecting the world politically in giving in representations powerful *metaphors* that change the way others experience reality. In *Political Representation* the ultimate point is, that the theory of historical representation can explain what representational democracy is about and draw power and attention away from the policy-making of “experts” and *theory*-based politics in favour of *experience*-based politics.²⁴⁴ Here draws comparison to Miki Kiyoshi’s “logic of the imagination”, which in turn was inspired by Cassirer. In Miki’s philosophy what is experienced is preconditioned by memory and what we experience is pure, spontaneous creation and what is represented is metaphorical creation by the historian. Miki’s aim was to create a philosophy that explained how reality is created in forms or symbols that others may reflect on to create further realities²⁴⁵.

So, experience is the at the root of historiography and this notion can be traced all the way to Leibniz through Cassirer and historicism. But what is representation then? The previous paragraphs already point us to a direction that should be obvious. Namely aesthetics and specifically metaphor, since we are commonly talking about language when discussing historiography. The model of representation is again to be found in the concept of the monad, but there is a slight problem here. One already referred to earlier when I mentioned the “Leibnizian dilemma”. While Leibniz’s metaphysics is the key, as we saw already in chapter I,

²⁴⁴ See chapter 8 in *Political Representation*. In p. 195 – 198 Ankersmit argues that representations provided by individuals (possibly acting as representatives of a group of people) are a critical part of policy making. Representations, when reflected with other representations provide a framework in which choices are made. The state apparatus has knowledge provided by experts, but needs representations provided by political actors to organise this knowledge into representations, which are evaluated by aesthetic standards. This is something we will return to shortly, though not in the framework of politics.

²⁴⁵ See John W. M. Krummel, 2016: *Introduction to Miki Kiyoshi and his Logic of the Imagination*. Social Imaginaries 2.1. p. 13 – 24.

there are adjustments to be made to the Monadology if we are to understand the analogy Ankersmit has made between the monad and his concept historical representation.

Historical Representation

As a theist, it was always in Leibniz's interests to promote metaphysics that would make room for the wisdom of God. Ariew and Garber even suggest that the Monadology is no more but a further elaboration of Leibniz's *Théodicée*²⁴⁶. As we have seen, even though substances in Leibniz's monadic universe are not causally interacting with one another, he maintained that God nevertheless had ensured harmonious synchronicity of all human experience. I. e. that conscious souls share perceptions, despite not truly interacting with each other in any way. Descartes had shared such theistic aspirations but had never been successful in providing an account for how his two substances, the mental and the extended, affected each other.²⁴⁷ Leibniz provided an answer in complete denial of intersubstantial causation. There were no categories of mental and the extended, but instead all monads would perceive a shared universe perfectly harmoniously, because God had chosen to create such a world on account of his moral perfection. Theorem 51 of the Monadology, one the Ankersmit mentions as applicable in narrative logic, describes how the principle of pre-established harmony ensures that perceptual states of any monad reflect and can be used to explain the perceptual states of other monads. Theorem 57 introduces an analogy between the universe and a town which is looked upon from different perspectives. The town is the same for everyone, though perceptions of it differ. On the other hand, and more precisely, the town *exists* due to our common perceptions of it. The town is not a genuine substance, but an aggregate. A well-founded phenomenon.

In some ways similar case of a need to account for God (and perhaps more familiar one) can be found in Kant, who distinguished between the noumenal world of which we can have no knowledge and the phenomenal world, of which we can have knowledge by imposing on reality categories such as temporality, dimension and causality. Now, Kant himself thought that science was about the phenomenal and that we must avoid attempting to gain knowledge of things as they are, but he was unable to ignore the noumenal completely

²⁴⁶ Ariew & Garber, 213.

²⁴⁷ Leibniz directly refers to Descartes' problem in § 78 – 80 of the *Monadology*.

because he situated some central notions – such as God, immortality and freedom – in it. These were not issues for pure reason but faith. The difference between Kant and Leibniz is that the latter clung to God not only through belief but also reason. The *Monadology* itself begins as an attempt at coherent explanation of the noumenal but gradually adds the phenomenal and eventually God’s goodness. All based on what he figured were the most rational of principles, though it may be argued that faith is ever present in the *Monadology* in the sense that it was faith precisely that brought about the “Leibnizian dilemma”. To explain the universe in terms acceptable to his theistic aspirations, Leibniz had to assume that God would not deceive his subjects but ensured that all experience is temporally synchronised between souls. Or you can think the other way around, that God’s wisdom ensures perfect harmony for his subjects. However, since the monads are not causally related to one another, the reader may ask: “What difference does this make for any of the subjects that live out this reality?” Ankersmit is pointing out an absurdity that Bertrand Russell noticed: The system disposes of time and space as phenomenal, but nevertheless supposes pre-established harmony in temporality.²⁴⁸

To take a step forward – that is, to switch the domain of historicism as a philosophy from objective past/reality to a logic/semantics of history – details such as the one about pre-established harmony had to be attended to by Ankersmit. In effect, Ankersmit radicalised the *Monadology* and narrativized the life-histories of Leibniz’s monads²⁴⁹. This is a large theme in chapter VI of *NL*:

We can safely disregard Leibniz’s theological speculations and still maintain that his theory of the proposition is a fundamental theorem on statements that have *Nss* [*narrative substances*] as their subjects.²⁵⁰

One way of making this move more justified is to see in Leibniz himself someone who wished to make the same move but was unable to, due to the theistic motivations that underlaid all

²⁴⁸ The “Leibnizian dilemma” is this: To explain the universe in terms acceptable to his theistic aspirations, Leibniz needs to assume, similarly to Descartes, that God would not deceive his subjects but ensures that all experience is temporally synchronised between souls. However, since the monads are not causally related to one another, the reader may ask: “What difference does this make for any of the subjects?” Ankersmit accuses Leibniz of an absurdity that Bertrand Russell had earlier pointed out: The system disposes of temporality as phenomenal, but nevertheless pre-supposes pre-established harmony. See page 135 – 136 in *Narrative Logic*.²⁴⁹ *NL*, 136.

²⁵⁰ Ankersmit 1983, 142. With “theory of the proposition” Ankersmit refers to the *predicate-in-subject* - principle.

his work. Ankersmit states himself that: “Because Leibniz was not radical enough in his ontology he created for himself the dilemma sketched above”²⁵¹. Arguably, this is one possible explanation for Leibniz’s suppression of the Monadology. His discovery of the calculus undoubtedly had an impact on the way he looked at metaphysics. He could develop his theory of substance with it. Cassirer saw in Leibniz someone who treated substance eventually as one would a function.²⁵² From substance then, or in it, phenomenal experience would spring forth in a way that could be compared to how in some quantum theories observation makes the universe fall out of superposition into something measurable. This is of course simply a metaphor, similar to the supposed difference between the noumenal and the phenomenal in substance. Such a suggestion goes beyond the previously mentioned view put forth by Daniel Garber and Glenn Hartz, that Leibniz was a “theory pluralist”, whom took both realist/materialist and idealist accounts equally seriously to solve philosophical problems²⁵³. Perhaps he did, but can there really be more than one “first philosophy”, as Leibniz calls his idealistic system in the Clarke-correspondence?²⁵⁴ Biographical musings aside, the point here is to suggest that the situation gives support to an argument that Ankersmit’s (and Cassirer’s) system is already implicit in Leibniz. This is because of the mathematical notion of function and Leibniz’s advanced understanding of it through his infinitesimal calculus.

Mathematically speaking, functions are how we indeed make sense of reality. The position of an object in flight, can be, for example, described as a function of time. And in modern semantics, the concept of function can be applied to explain how meanings of texts derive from the combined meanings of statements²⁵⁵. The former may be thought of as a function of the latter. You have inputs and produce an output. You can understand something about the output that you could not directly understand about the inputs separately. With function, the thing is that inputs and outputs are always signs, the internal meaning of which is unimportant for the function itself to work. Outputs simply are more complex signs and this suggests that “understanding” is a matter of perceiving structures of meaningless signs. This

²⁵¹ NL, 136.

²⁵² See p. 13 – 14.

²⁵³ Garber, 386. Garber refers directly to Hartz on this.

²⁵⁴ He states this in the article 21 of his fifth letter. This letter, made up of no less than 130 articles contains most of Leibniz’s late metaphysics in itself.

²⁵⁵ As was suggested earlier in chapter I.

is how predicate logic can work. You have meaningless x's and y's that can be quantified and assigned predicates and with long and elaborate demonstrations one can convey much with these x's and y's. But things are, again, different for Ankersmit. While such logical work is important for historical research and science in particular, in representational logic it is the whole text that is the sign. The sign is not analysed but meaning is directly assigned to it, while it remains unchanged.²⁵⁶ Whole texts are signs and therefore make up the official form of argument inside the discipline of history.

There is no need for *God* in Ankersmit's representationalist philosophy to necessitate that all points of view are in harmony. The metaphysical difficulty is removed, since all we expect harmony of in a historical debate, is the facts. And most often the truth on the level of statements in historical narratives is taken for granted. In his answer to Allan Megill's question, stated in a conference, about the monads as harmonised points of view into the universe Ankersmit states: "---if you would say: 'all history books we presently have are all monads, so to speak', and let us also assume that we are dealing with decent historians who did their work properly and that all the statements they mention in the book are in agreement with each other. Well, then the whole problem that Leibniz has to deal with, disappears. This 'harmonie pré-établie' as Leibniz called it is, so to speak, thrown in your lap"²⁵⁷. In WEM, he continues: "It then is as if past reality has been so kind and obliging to do for the historian all the computations that Leibniz had assigned to God"²⁵⁸. We should recall that in Leibniz's theory of truth complete concepts cannot contradict themselves. Things either have a property or they don't and statements on things are true or they are not. It's not possible to create a narrative substance that is self-contradictory, though it is of course possible in retrospect for others to see them as such. So long as we trust that historians do not distort facts and remain coherent in their writing by not contradicting themselves, we may trust that all their points of view are in perfect harmony.²⁵⁹ One may counter that this only applies to the historian's personal view of the past and cannot help us in getting at the truth about history. But this was never Ankersmit's point. He is only explaining why there must be

²⁵⁶ WEM, 14.

²⁵⁷ Ankersmit 2013. He answered questions after his opening speech to the Inaugural conference of the International Network for Theory of History in the University of Ghent, Belgium. See the sources section for a link.

²⁵⁸ WEM, 8.

²⁵⁹ See also, for an elaboration of the same: NL, 130 – 132. WEM, 6 – 8.

historical debate based on other criteria than truth. Historians may make opposite claims about events in the past and sometimes it is easy to point out a misuse of sources. But different conflicting theses may arise from the same sources and often do between historians, especially on large topics such as World War I for example. We simply see different “truths” in them, so to speak, and pick different facts to present. In the latter case there is debate.

While in every-day life facts are what unite all our views and theses are supported by facts, narrative idealism makes life difficult for the historian similarly to how the thesis of theory-ladenness must alter our views about science. In both cases it is philosophically wise to admit these difficulties, however. The difference of course is the while science is about the general, history is about the particular. In Ankersmit’s words, “there is a looseness in historical discussion that has no parallel in the exact sciences”²⁶⁰. Truth (in the correspondent sense) of the past is often contested, and the bigger part of the past one writes about the more difficult the matter gets. And here is where historians get creative and aesthetics is more and more pronounced as the way to “historical truth”. This type of truth is also the aim of rational debate in philosophy of history²⁶¹. While in science there are rational and empirical methods for testing theory, in history we are limited to rationality.

Ankersmit does not care if the interpretations made on history differ between historians and in fact they must differ since otherwise there would be no debates in history or philosophy of history. There are no two monads or aspects of the past that are the same. Here we have Ankersmit’s adherence to Leibniz’s law of identity of indiscernibles (though this realisation is rather trivial)²⁶². If two texts are the same, then are they the same narrative substance? The answer is not altogether clear initially, because unlike the later three-place model of representation, where Ankersmit has first the past, then the represented, and finally the representation, narrative logic features only narrative substances. And narrative substances are said to be “identical to their linguistic manifestations”²⁶³. However, Fairbrother, in interpreting Ankersmit, has pointed out a potential “*disanalogy*” between the Monadology and narrative logic in a similar thought experiment, in which two historians coming from

²⁶⁰ NL, 85.

²⁶¹ MTR, 124 – 125.

²⁶² He says as much in NL, 138. Put simply, the law demands that there can be no identical things without them being the same thing.

²⁶³ NL, 111.

different cultural backgrounds happen to produce the same text²⁶⁴. In fact, in the context of narrative logic, this act is not different from a historian simply reading another's text or even his own text²⁶⁵. In all cases the same *representation* is faced. Looking at this from the logical level of statements, both historians could be said to construct a meaning based on going through the text. Obviously, the meaning and the text cannot epistemologically correspond here, because of differing intensions of terms, and Ankersmit is fine with this. However, if one looks at the matter from the Leibnizian perspective of *representational logic*, we have a case a single monad. But The question remains: Since we agree that the two historian's meant different things, how is it possible that we have here only one intensional object?

Based on what we know based on the previous section, it should be clear that there are two levels in Ankersmit's *monadological analogy*. On one level (historical experience) historian is *inside the monad*, so to speak. On the other level we step outside the monad and all there is are meaningless representations²⁶⁶. The monadology encompasses both these levels. Ankersmit's position can be explained through his interpretation of Leibniz's notion of substance once more, in which the monad (which is described as "being" in WEM) is both representing and being represented²⁶⁷. As I have suggested, we can understand this as historical experience that is given by the historian in representation. Analogically then what the historian experiences is the monad, but it is also contains a reflection on all other monads in the universe, because representation is only possible in reflection to previous representations. This is in the precondition of historical experience. Historical experience also cannot be expressed objectively. It must be re-presented and when this is done it is no longer subjective experience. But – and this is crucial – it is still *derived* from the experience in a sublime act that is analogous to how in differential calculus a mathematician derives the local minima and maxima of a given function²⁶⁸. So, there is still another analogy at work, here.

²⁶⁴ Fairbrother 2018, 401 – 402.

²⁶⁵ NL, 110.

²⁶⁶ Representations flow in and give experience. In experience as aspect of the past is present. Experience may be put forth as representation. It makes no sense to ask which happens before the other, since in sublimity temporality makes no sense. See p. .

²⁶⁷ WEM, 9.

²⁶⁸ In SHE, p. 175 Ankersmit describes the act of finding out the maxima and minima of a function before the discovery of calculus and argues that there was something *sublime* in this act before it could be made sense of through calculus. He compares this to how historians figure out which to choose out of infinitely many possible true statements to write in their texts.

One relating to the Cassirerian interpretation of the monad as function²⁶⁹. This is something I will return to again in Chapter III²⁷⁰. I think Fairbrother sees *only the text or the representation* as analogous to Leibniz's monad, while it is both the representation and the represented towards which Ankersmit's monadic analogy is directed. The representation and the represented are two sides of the same coin, and it is this coin that corresponds to the monad in the analogy.

An easier, "un-Leibnizian" way to describe the same is to turn to aesthetics. In the introduction we saw how Ankersmit has applied the substitution account for aesthetic representation from Nelson Goodman and Arthur Danto's concept of historical representation²⁷¹. When you think of a history book as one would, say, a painting, you can see that no two individuals will have the same aesthetic experience when looking at it. The representation has meaning for individual viewers that varies according to the dispositions of the viewers to experience it, and these dispositions will vary from moment to moment even in an individual, though it makes little practical sense to argue that they are not the same they were a minute ago. We can dwell on experience but must realise that our ability to experience changes both collectively and individually. In HR, Ankersmit writes about "the privatization of the past" and about statues, as an example, which as historical representations often meld with urban surroundings, no longer acting as symbols people attach collective meanings to – something they originally were. The same is true of holidays, which may be declared to commemorate some event that causes a collective sublime realisation such as a revolution. Yet the holiday eventually loses its significance and becomes rather an opportunity for leisure with no reflection for the original social circumstances for which the holiday was declared.²⁷² Eventually then, the statue and the holiday are mere signs, in a sense, just like a historical text is, devoid of inherent meaning. The collective significance they once had was due to shared historical experience. The representation only has a shared meaning for those that are invested in getting to know what the representation was about by getting to the facts.

It seems implausible to think that two artists should create the same painting. However, if this took place, we would not automatically think that they must have been trying to

²⁶⁹ See p. 37 – 38 in Chapter I.

²⁷⁰ See chapter III p. 83.

²⁷¹ HR, 222 – 229.

²⁷² HR, 165 – 175.

represent the same thing. Such an idea is plausible only if we think that artistic representation is the same as copying. This is a point Ankersmit makes as he says that two painters do not paint the same landscape, but their interpretations (represented) of the landscape²⁷³. Ironically however, it is, in a sense copying, but not of the phenomenal reality that we apply transcendental categories to. The “copying” is partly made of what the artist experiences at the sight of the landscape. Artist of different genres’ always attempt to find a balance between substitutional and descriptonal modes of representation.

For now, the point should be made that representations do not correspond to representeds in the *common epistemological sense* because one is subjective (or sublime) and the other aims at the universal. The relationship between them can either be described as an aesthetic one or characterised as one between a function and its derivative. Ankersmit writes of the monad: “---there always is a relation between each phase of its ‘life’ and the representation it will then have of the universe – in this way the latter is a *function* of the former”²⁷⁴. Though it must be said that the concept of narrative substance is confusing since often in NL it is seemingly used to refer simply to a complete concept in the Leibnizian sense, ignoring the matters about historical experience and perception that have been pronounced here and later in the book and other work of Ankersmit.²⁷⁵ Narrative substances seem devoid of these. What this means is that Ankersmit had not developed his “historical ontology” yet, or that he was at this time merely interested in spelling out his narrative logic. He is clearly committed to the idea that narrative substances incorporate the aesthetic and political attitudes of their writers, but he does not associate these with “historical reality” until later.

²⁷³ WEM, 9.

²⁷⁴ WEM, 18.

²⁷⁵ For example, on p. 111: “Nss belong to that curious kind of thing which ‘as a thing’ is identical with its linguistic manifestations. The process of its constitution as an individual things is identical with the individuation of its “complete notion”, to use a Leibnizian term”.

III – Calculus: Objectivity and the Application of Representational Logic

In this chapter I will explain the appliance of the notion of mathematical calculus in Ankersmit's philosophy and from there move on to how this notion helps him explain what *objectivity* means in his philosophy and how the notion is tied to the application of Leibniz in it. We should understand by now that Ankersmit's sees the monad in representations. They are equivalent to functions in that they allow us to see the past in a certain proposed way. As was mentioned in Chapter II, we may also think of the historical experience as we would a monad. Our experience of the past is then analogous to a state of a monad, and the way the world manifests to a subject.

The notion of calculus helps Ankersmit solve two problem related to the application of his philosophy. Firstly, calculus is applied analogically to history-writing. Nothing prevents defining history-writing in terms of epistemological semantics. Indeed, epistemology contributes to historical experience by giving experience form. But describing this process is not Ankersmit's project. He wants to show how we can account for the turning of the subjective and sublime in experience into concrete representation by the historian. How *historical representation* is derived from *historical experience*. Leibniz believed that mathematics was crucial for philosophy and in an answer to an unanimous critic claimed: "He claims that mathematicians who dabble in philosophy scarcely ever succeed; on the contrary, it seems that they should succeed the best, since they are accustomed to thinking with exactitude"²⁷⁶. Just as Leibniz became fascinated with the notions of function in his metaphysics and that of calculus in his proof that God chooses the best, Ankersmit has applied the notion of calculus to explain how the historians seeks to create the best possible representation. Additionally, the notion of calculus helps Ankersmit elaborate what he refers to with the notion of historical reality, which as we know is not the past but our collectively shared phenomenal understanding of the past. We recall his denial of narrative realism²⁷⁷.

²⁷⁶ Ariew & Garber, 229.

²⁷⁷ See p. 20 – 21 in the introduction.

The calculus is a useful notion in explaining what Ankersmit calls “scope criterion”. This notion explains what the objective of history-writing is for a historian. In the previous paragraph already, we see that a Leibnizian analogy is again already in place here as the historian is made analogous to Leibniz’s God. The calculus was a for Leibniz a tool used in proving the perfection of God. In WEM, Ankersmit provides citations in proof of this²⁷⁸.

The aim of this chapter is, therefore, mostly to explicate the application of representational logic. However, with application it is not meant that Ankersmit’s philosophy should somehow be useful for the historian himself. Its function is instead to provide a framework that allows for genuine historical debate. Ankersmit never intended for his narrative logic to have more application than Leibniz did with his *Monadology*. Both are theories of the noumenal and as “first philosophies” provide the most basic level of discourse in philosophy. Ankersmit’s theory is therefore primarily intended as a platform for philosophy of history.

I will start here with explaining how I think some of the theorems of the *Monadology* (38, 47, 51, 57, 58 and 61) invoked by Ankersmit relate to his work. I will then provide an interpretation of the parts of his philosophy that relate to the notion of calculus. This involves necessarily bringing up aesthetics and metaphor, which instead of metaphor, help him establish what objectivity means in his philosophy of history. The chapter’s latter part focuses on some of the criticism Ankersmit has received; focusing on those that accuse him of postmodernism and the inapplicability of his theory.

The Historian as God: Subjectivity and Objectivity

Leibniz’s God chooses the best of possible worlds to create²⁷⁹. Theorems 38 and 47 of the *Monadology* explain how God is the only necessary substance, from whom all other derive and are maintained:

All created or derivative monads are produced by him. They are generated by the continual flashes of silent lightning (so to speak) that God gives off from moment to moment—flashes that are limited in what they can give only by the essential limits on what the created things can take in.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁸ WEM, 19 – 20. He specifically refers to *the Discourse on Metaphysics* and Leibniz’s *Théodicée*.

²⁷⁹ See p. in chapter I.

²⁸⁰ See Bennett, Jonathan 2017. Translation with notes: *The Principles of Philosophy known as Monadology* by G. W. Leibniz, 1712. § 47.

Simple enough. Theorem 57 introduces a metaphor about the universe as a town which is looked upon from different perspectives. The town is the same for everyone, though perceptions of it differ. On the other hand, and more precisely, the town *exists* due to the shared monadic perceptions of it. The town exists, even though it is not a genuine substance, but merely an aggregate. A well-founded phenomenon. In § 58 then, Leibniz explains how God, in his infinite wisdom and goodness chooses the most perfect world possible to create. In this he seeks “the greatest possible variety, but with all the order there could be; i.e. it is the way to get as much perfection as there could be”²⁸¹. § 61 is a long account of how simple substances come to terms with aggregated ones. The interested reader may look it up in attachment I. The point is that all simple substances perceive a phenomenal shared universe, and this is in harmony with how aggregated substances all affect one another in a full universe. A moving body only seems to have an infinitesimally small effect to other bodies in distance and similarly souls at a time can focus on a part of the universe with distinction, while most of the universe remains obscure.

Now one may wonder why these are integrated into Ankersmit’s theory? Well, firstly, in several places Ankersmit draws an analogy between the historian and Leibniz’s God:

Indeed, when the historian is writing history he may be regarded as a kind of god, although, of course, the Leibnizian God deals with actual states of affairs while the historian only works with descriptions of them²⁸².

This analogy is meant to help explain how the historian is someone who attempts to create the best of possible worlds, that is, a historical reality that best fits both the facts established through historical research, and his historical experience. It, via theorems 38 and 47, also reminds readers that in Ankersmit’s system everything is meaningless without the historian. In many of Ankersmit’s texts, the point is made that representations need to be understood as wholes. This is because in historical debate, we must respect the whole message, as intended by whoever wrote the book only have meaning once they enter the sphere of historical experience²⁸³. The meaning once the book is read. Before this, the book is a dead thing lying on the table. In WEM, Ankersmit writes that historical representations as “signs

²⁸¹ See Bennett, Jonathan 2017. Translation with notes: *The Principles of Philosophy known as Monadology* by G. W. Leibniz, 1712. § 48.

²⁸² NL, 212. See also WEM, 18 & HR 212 – 214.

²⁸³ See e.g. MTR chapter 7, WEM, 14.

are symbols that represent themselves; they are, therefore, essentially meaningless---”²⁸⁴ And he goes on: “But meaning can be projected on, or associated with texts, thanks to there being other texts that are regarded as their representational rivals when dealing with roughly the same historical phenomenon”²⁸⁵. Here Ankersmit clearly again follows Cassirer, who claims that

Human knowledge is by its very nature symbolic knowledge. It is this feature which characterises both its strength and its limitations. And for symbolic thought it is indispensable to make up a sharp distinction between real and possible, between actual and ideal things. A symbol has no actual existence as a part of the physical world; it has a “meaning”²⁸⁶.

“Meaning” here refers to the meaning the symbol has to the individual. Ankersmit and Cassirer diverge in that the term “symbol” for Cassirer refers to internal meaning (symbolic form), while Ankersmit reserves it for the external signs, similarly to the way Leibniz does in an essay Ankersmit refers to. In both cases, however, meaning is not universal or inherent. The point is that while texts, as they are, have no “actuality”, they do have “possibility”. They meaningfully open up for readers equipped with a specific set of symbolic forms. The Bible will mean different things to a religious person and a scientist – which, by the way, may be two aspects of a single person. The very meaning of “epistemological meaning” is that it is phenomenal in character and always is dependent on symbolic forms. Ankersmit’s “representational meaning” is fundamental and undefined, because representation (the category under which texts belong in Ankersmit’s logic of history) is more basic than the statement²⁸⁷. The text is a sign or a symbol.

Ankersmit introduces the notion of the sign and writes of Leibniz’s thoughts about it, mentioning what he calls “Leibniz’s semantics”²⁸⁸. He refers to a text Leibniz wrote in c. 1686 called *Meditations on Knowledge, Truth and Ideas*. Ariew and Garber claim that Leibniz presents himself in it as a mediator for the famous Arnauld-Malebranche debate about the latter’s occasionalism²⁸⁹. Leibniz writes here that while the human mind can think of primitive

²⁸⁴ Ankersmit 2018, *Reply to my critics*, 478.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.* 478 – 479.

²⁸⁶ Cassirer 1945, 80. While their philosophies are similar in their approach to reality, Cassirer here uses the term “symbol” in the meaning. Ankersmit sometimes calls the representation a symbol, meaningless one at that.

²⁸⁷ MTR, 153 – 154.

²⁸⁸ WEM, 11.

²⁸⁹ Ariew & Garber, 23. Occasionalism denies causal interaction between body and soul, just as Leibniz does. It explains mind-matter dualism by resorting to God’s active interference in all instances of interaction between the souls and body. Leibniz instead insisted that in thanks to God’s foresight he could choose the world where

concepts distinctly, complex ones fall beyond the mind's immediate cognitive reach. Ankersmit takes the example of a complex concept in the thousand-sided, polygon. Something it is impossible to distinctly imagine, unless broken down to the more primitive concepts that make up the notion of this complex polygon. Therefore, we rely on "blind symbols" that cannot be adequately thought of but can nevertheless be broken down to primitive concepts that *can* be distinctly grasped. From this it is clear that the essay explains Leibniz's intensional logic, as I described it in chapter I, and therefore does not discuss representation. It is an argument for better scholarly use of language and his ideas about the *characteristica universalis*. Leibniz does indeed write about blind symbols, but goes on to claim that there is no theoretical obstruction for reducing any complex concept to its primitive parts so long as there is sufficient computational prowess. Nowhere is it claimed that signs should only stand for themselves. Leibniz ends the essay with an example, in which it is claimed that perception is reducible to "minute shapes and motions alone", clearly alluding that this published paper is not in support of the idealistic late metaphysics of Leibniz, but rather the theory of describable corporeal universe. On the other hand, it must be said here that Leibniz himself expresses his suspicions about human capability for adequate and distinct knowledge, though he suspects that numbers might come close to this²⁹⁰. I find it curious that Ankersmit chose to refer to this essay in arguing for the notion that symbols are meaningless signs. He would have been better served by continuing to interpret a historian's paradigm as a monadic point of view, as Cassirer has done.

But let us get back to the notion of meaning, which is argued to be relational here. In the *Monadology* monads are derivatives of God and Cassirer saw this as a crucial point in his understanding of Leibniz's philosophy²⁹¹. Monads are analogous to theories or symbolic forms. Starkly put, they are how phenomenal reality is derived from noumenal reality. Now, the synchronised perceptions of monads are for Leibniz what make the phenomenal universe²⁹². Logically, for Cassirer and Ankersmit the same applies. But *in practice* here

our free choices and emotions correspond to bodily functions. He thought it erroneous to suppose God in his perfection would create a universe where he had to actively take part. The perfect clockmaker would never need to wind his clock.

²⁹⁰ Ariew & Garber, 24. To further confuse things, Leibniz always expressed his conviction that the *characteristica universalis* could be completed. He was ambivalent on this, as sometimes he withdrew from the project while proclaiming its possibility at other times. See Donald Rutherford:

²⁹¹ See Chapter I.

²⁹² Recall again the metaphor of the town in §57 of the *Monadology*.

nothing is pre-determined, and historians must struggle to create their universes by expanding the amount of relevant representations in the sphere of their knowledge, which alone is governed by a “pre-established harmony”. Practically speaking then, when finishing her book, the historian is in a position analogous to God. The historian has a certain amount of facts at her disposal and what she’s doing in the writing process is what God does in Leibniz’s system: Creating “the greatest possible variety, but with all the order there could be”²⁹³. In *representational logic* meaning is immediately given in how it is reflected in regard to other representation. In *representational practice* of historical writing requires of the historian skill and a certain aesthetic intuition.

In NL, Ankersmit writes about the “scope criterion”. The standard by which all historian’s intuitively write as they seek to account for the facts established in historical research as well as possible while making a thesis with the widest “scope” possible, that is, a thesis that explains much of the past. It’s obvious that a historical writing with only facts in it and no motif is not much of a historical writing. But the same is true of a text that claims much but goes against or ignores facts.²⁹⁴ In WEM, Ankersmit repeats the scope criterion in clearly Leibnizian terms. He speaks of the appliance of Leibniz’s notion of the calculus to the notion of *writing of history*. directly referring to how Leibniz applied the notion of Calculus in his metaphysics. God, in creation, is like a mathematician at work, applying the calculus to a function. Both have a perfect method for finding the local minima and maxima of functions, guaranteeing optimal results²⁹⁵.

Essentially the same can be explained in yet another way, which may also help us along in understanding how the notion of infinitesimal calculus might help us understand how Ankersmit’s apriorist system of debate within the community of historians should work. In chapter I we already mentioned the useful fiction of the *narrativist universe*, where statements individuate narrative substances. Each one is necessarily a different whole, which can be defined only by going through all the statements contained in the narrative substance.²⁹⁶ Narrative substances are intentional entities. Later in the book, and also in a

²⁹³ See Bennett, Jonathan 2017. Translation with notes: *The Principles of Philosophy known as Monadology* by G. W. Leibniz, 1712. § 58.

²⁹⁴ NL, 221 – 224. See also Kuukkanen 2018, 357 – 358.

²⁹⁵ WEM, 18 – 19.

²⁹⁶ See chapter I p. 47 – 48.

later text he discusses what follows from this situation. Ankersmit's 2014 essay about the subject deals with the *representationalist universe* and explains what meaning is in this context. The configurations of statements that form narrative substances or representations in the representational universe can metaphorically be said to form clusters:

HR's tend to be comments on each other and ... that they will tend to cluster together in groups of HR's, whereas the "space" in the representationalist universe between such clusters is relatively empty. A HR without any clear relationship to other HR's will tend to lose its meaning and to disintegrate into its constituent statements—and no HR will be willing to run that risk since it means its death.²⁹⁷

Essentially the same is given in NL already in chapter VIII:

The relative fruitfulness of the Nss proposed by the narrative idealist historian cannot be vindicated or denied merely by recourse to statements (whether or not belonging to these Nss). This can only be done by recourse to other Nss. We can only determine the (relative) merits of a narratio by comparing it with other *narratios*.²⁹⁸

A representation is an indivisible individual and unanalysable in itself. It only gains meaning through being reflected on other representations. This is a surprisingly illuminating way to describe the community of historians, who supposedly subscribe to the logic of representation. Each historian has knowledge of representations. Specialists of a certain topic will know many representations that are in close proximity to one another. For example, historians specialising in the middle ages have knowledge of the same works on medieval history written by previous generations. No one would question that having such knowledge is a prerequisite for being an expert on medieval history. The man from the street will not be able to understand past reality in a way that historians in their community do. He will not be able to locate the appropriate "cluster" or of representations or "area" in the infinite representational universe.²⁹⁹ Since narrative realism is false, the representational universe is the only historical reality we have. "*To put it with a dash of paradox: historical reality only comes into being when the past no longer exists*" Ankersmit writes, referring to Arthur Danto's ideas about the nature of historical representation³⁰⁰. On the level of texts and representations one cannot truthfully refer to the past, but only one's ideas about it. Historical reality comes to existence in representations through fixed accounts of history and

²⁹⁷ Ankersmit 2014 119.

²⁹⁸ NL, 223.

²⁹⁹ Ankersmit 2014, 118 – 120.

³⁰⁰ WEM, 10.

debate between historians concerning these accounts is what helps us create further historical representations.

The situation is the same as with the town in § 57 of the *Monadology*. Nominally there's nothing outside the monads, but reality can still be said to be constituted in the collective personal perceptions of it phenomenally. *Political Representation* contains a straightforward description of how Ankersmit interprets the theorem. He points out how Meinecke and Cassirer were those who "pointed out how much the historian's notion of historical individuality owes to Leibniz's monadology".³⁰¹ Everybody has an aspect of the thing, and luckily, we can share these aspects representationally so that we can communally know things better. While it makes sense to say that writing of history is a creative process and the text evolves and changes along the way, the final product can only be a singular point of view into the past. Such points of view are what gives meaning to history and allows debate on historical matters to occur. Since the past does not exist, this is the only way we can make sense of "historical reality"³⁰².

If we call back to mind the thought experience given by Fairbrother in the previous chapter, in which two historians coming from differing backgrounds accidentally write the same text, it can here be argued that while the text is the same, the two historians will position it differently into the *representationalist universe* due to their differing knowledge of other proximate representations. They may write the same text, but their representeds are different. In terms of calculus, both historians attempt to find the maximum and minimum of their function (the represented in historical experience), they approach "historical truth" while never reaching it. And historical truth is defined by the maxima and minima of all previous representations known to these individuals.³⁰³ The historian is limited in two ways. First, in his command of representations. If you know little about the history of the middle ages, you shouldn't make great claims about it until you "stock up on representations". Secondly, putting forth your own argument in a representation requires skill. You may have

³⁰¹ PR, 227 – 230. The citation is on p. 227.

³⁰² For Ankersmit's arguments against narrative realism, see the beginning of chapter V in NL or section 4 in WEM.

³⁰³ WEM, 19.

the historical experience but reaching the maximum and minimum in the chosen topic is impossible, though we may approach it infinitely.

What this all comes down to is that historical representation and historical meaning are relationalist so long as we move within the boundaries of representationalist logic. Here Ankersmit follows what he calls Cassirer's *relationalist logic*: “---we saw that Cassirer's relationalist logic compels us to see reality as a model of an abstract mathematical calculus instead of the reverse”³⁰⁴. The historians historical experience is forever immortalised in a text through the sublime process of representation, which is explained in terms of the analogy with calculus. In SHE Ankersmit describes the work of historians as analogous to that of mathematicians. A mathematician can derive (with calculus) from a function its local minimum and maximum. This had of course been possible before the discovery of calculus, as he could find out these values through trial and error, but with calculus the unexplained sense of *sublimity* was removed from this process, which suddenly has become commensurable. Ankersmit's point is that historiography is actually similar, with the exception that there will likely never be a calculus for the discipline of history.³⁰⁵ Given sufficient time, we write out our theses until we feel we get them quite right and then publish, but there is no consensus-theory for explaining how our subjective thoughts and emotions turn into representations³⁰⁶. It's impossible for the impressionist painter to explain why the powerful colours applied in the painting represent his or her intention. Here the sublimity remains. And the same applies to our evaluations of the representations of others. We will always set representations in relations to one another and *sublimely calculate* which is the best.

Ankersmit's historical representations are not only analogous to monads as indivisible entities and as perception but also monads as functions. He's saying that historian's make sense of reality with models (representations), which are analogous to mathematically defined theories³⁰⁷. While there certainly is no calculus for the humanities, the notion of *sublime* is a theory on how historical experience is applied in creation of historical reality. Perhaps it is not satisfactory theory, since we can seemingly never account for what this sublimity amounts to,

³⁰⁴ Ankersmit 2014, 119.

³⁰⁵ SHE, 175.

³⁰⁶ If we could, we would have a solution to the *hard problem of consciousness*.

³⁰⁷ WEM, 21. Representations do not represent the past but only *aspects of the past*.

other than explain it in difficult to fathom analogies. We are left to wonder, just how we can then decide what representation is the best. We may *feel* that some representation is best that in a debate you can't make arguments based on that. Ankersmit has a couple of answers here. Firstly, he will remind us that the facts we use in historiography are always epistemologically grounded and should be agreed upon universally. An epistemologically *objective* historiography gets the facts right. But beyond this, the most representationally *objective* historiography on a given topic should logically be the one made by a historian who is most familiar with the "area of the representationalist universe" that deals with this topic. Here, I don't think Ankersmit has a way out from this relativism. But he doesn't care, since representationalist objectivity arises from the relative merits of representations, each of which was put forth as the best possible representation by its writer – who, we assume, did the best he could. Objectivity in historiography is realised only when skilled writers put forth their factual, yet strongly subjective accounts. Ankersmit abhors traditional views on objectivity, since they prevent the preceding from occurring:

As we have noted, traditionally the historian is required to refrain from the introduction of moral and political values in his writings since this would compromise his objectivity. But as we shall now have to recognize, this familiar injunction to the historian is naive because it fails to do justice to the fact that at the level of moral and political values the boundaries between the subject (the historian) and the object (the past) tend to dissolve.³⁰⁸

In the introduction already I pronounced with citations Ankersmit's attitude towards contemporary debate in philosophy of history. His view is that genuine debate is the result of historical representations being set into relations with one another in each participant's mind. Historians (or rather philosophers of history) are obliged to read one another's work constantly and produce their own representations rationally in response to. All he really calls for is an aesthetic approach to writing, in which the subjective is not held back. The collective subjectivity of all participants is the best guarantee of a most objective end result of the debate. Commitment to the traditional account of objectivity will never allow for the debate to begin.

Jouni-Matti Kuukkanen has earlier noted that Ankersmit's notion of objectivity in history defies "ontological objectivity", that is, objectivity as correspondence between past reality

³⁰⁸ MTR, 223.

and the narrative³⁰⁹. For Ankersmit such objectivity is impossible, since we cannot accurately describe the past. In terms of the analogy with calculus, truth is never reached though it may be approached. All representations the way Ankersmit describes them are then from a commonsensical point of view subjective. And indeed, historical experience is always subjective since it encompasses emotion, moral position and aesthetic preferences. Historical experience forms in reflection to preceding representations and is thereby in coherence with them. So, if what we generally feel is “subjective” is shut out from history-writing, we will never reach what history-writing is about: The relationally defined meaning of the past we debate about continuously.

Kuukkanen does well in bringing up the references made by Ankersmit to Karl Popper’s theory of falsification as he discusses the former’s rationalism³¹⁰. This is a comparison Ankersmit himself has made in HR³¹¹. As we already discussed in chapter I, Popper can also be said to have applied “scope” in arguing for what makes scientific theories good. The best theories risk much by explaining as many phenomena as possible, thereby putting themselves at risk of being proven wrong. The same is true of the best historical narratives. They aim to provide a unified description of large parts of the past – think here of narrative substances like, “the renaissance” or “the cold war” – past. Successful historiographies change the way we think about the past. They remain *at the centre of the cluster* in the representationalist universe. Ankersmit sees in Popper’s philosophy of science the same aestheticism that defines his account of *history writing*³¹². Both are attempts at ordering reality in an aesthetically pleasing way. We want elegant scientific theories with scope and the same applies to historical representation.

So to elaborate how debate in the discipline of history takes place, Ankersmit turns to aesthetics. And aesthetics is the answer to the historian successfully gets closer and closer to the local maximum and minimum of her chosen function, or historical topic (*historical experience*). In NL, aesthetics is not covered since he had yet to turn his narrativist theory into one about representation in Arthur Danto’s sense of the word³¹³. Instead, he discusses

³⁰⁹ Kuukkanen, 2018, 358 – 360.

³¹⁰ Kuukkanen 2018, 361.

³¹¹ HR, 139.

³¹² HR, 98. “---the realm of aesthetics is where science and history finally meet each other”.

³¹³ Danto’s influence is explicit in chapter 4 of HT, 1994, and the essay *Statements, Texts and Pictures* of 1995.

metaphor. It is what gives historiography its “scope” and thereby its ability grant the past meaning. Ankersmit refuses to admit that metaphor could be reduced to logical language, as philosophers like Max Black have claimed³¹⁴. Historical metaphor can transcend the borderline between reality and language precisely because it invokes emotion and the sublime and enables that stirring realisation one sometimes gets while reading that the past is truly strange in comparison to one’s present. Metaphor is what connects language with *aspects of the past*³¹⁵. It also forces the reader into making a subjective investment into the representation at hand³¹⁶. It allows the historian to use natural language as a painter would use a brush. He can create a representation that suggests much more than meets the eye initially. And representations are not language. Of course, there is a drawback. For example, the decades following World War II are called the “cold war”. This powerful metaphor is tremendously illuminating for most readers but would be utterly meaningless to an uneducated person with little knowledge of historical events. Therefore, its power is limited in the sense that we have to assume our readership has background knowledge in our topic to understand what we are presenting the past *as*. Here we see again that previous representations are the prerequisite for effective use of (and understanding of) metaphors.

Representations can be argued for rationally, but this requires a balance between aesthetics. (In parallel, rational argument for facts given in singular statements is better served by epistemology). And aesthetics is what mostly replaces the notion of metaphor in later Ankersmit, who widens his theory to include all sorts of historical representation³¹⁷. Epistemology can provide historians with certainty over the facts of history and that each of the empirically descriptive statements in historical texts are true. But only aesthetic intuition, and specifically, understanding of metaphor in the case of texts, can help in rational evaluation of the whole. My best answer for explaining what gives us this *aesthetic intuition* is that as was elaborated on p. 80, it follows from knowledge of various other representations preceding the one under the process of *history writing* one can maximise scope when the vast knowledge of the historian makes it possible to extend metaphor into different areas of the “representational universe”. But as said. Use of powerful metaphor puts readers under stress

³¹⁴ NL, 193 – 195.

³¹⁵ Ankersmit 2013, 177 – 178.

³¹⁶ MTR, 74.

³¹⁷ See p. in Chapter II. Metaphor is still discussed, but is it contained in aesthetics.

as they struggle then to navigate the representational universe, less equipped than the writer, with preceding representations.

Objectivity Contested: Ankersmit's postmodernism

Some critics do not accept Ankersmit's Leibniz-inspired definition for meaning or objectivity but insist on what was earlier referred to as "ontological objectivity" of historical realism. That is, staying true to the facts and not adding anything of your own to the historical narrative. This is how historicism too is sometimes idealised³¹⁸. This brings us to the topic of Ankersmit's postmodernism. Since Ankersmit has moved on from historical entelechy situated in past reality to theorising that historiography is about narrative (represented) substances and not "real" ones in the past. What is written by the historian becomes a representation of some subjectively experienced aspect of the past. However, are not the critics then right in calling Ankersmit a postmodernist? John Zammito's reviews of Ankermsit's work pronounces his postmodernism, referring to how Ankersmit discards any possibility of there being a link between evidence and past reality. There is, after all the unbreachable gap between the logics of statement (truth) and that of representation. He complains that this leads to historiography losing all objectivity. This criticism deepens as Zammito characterises Ankersmit as an ambivalent character who, after abandoning positivism in history then re-introduces it³¹⁹.

From our perspective it is rather easy to see why this criticism comes about. Zammito does not properly notice or accept Ankersmit's division of history into the realm of historical research and historical writing³²⁰. A division which reflects the two accounts of objectivity and that have been elaborated here. Ankersmit does not claim that evidence doesn't give us facts about the past. Merely that language cannot adequately describe past as it was. In a later review, the heart of the problem is seen in the metaphorical and aesthetic character of historical texts, which Zammito himself interprets as containing description and meaning in the conventional sense. He writes: "Unless we can juxtapose the metaphor to its *target*, and not simply to *other* metaphors, it is unclear how insight into that of which it is a metaphor can

³¹⁸ Referring to the idea Ranke presented that historians should "erase themselves from their historical writings".

³¹⁹ Zammito 1998.

³²⁰ See p. 19 in the introduction.

occur, or how it might now be appraised”.³²¹ It’s clear that their argument here about differing definitions for the notion of metaphor. Zammito thinks its language, while Ankersmit positions it into representation. My point for the time being is that the problems accounted for here simply do not appear to Ankersmit in his Leibnizian vision because of this clear division of labour between epistemology (language) and representation.

Michael Stanford, in *An Introduction to the Philosophy of History*, describes Ankersmit’s “postmodernism”³²² in six points out of which two are relevant here³²³: 1) “That in historiography the representation is the reality. Texts are self-referential; they do not refer to anything else”. 2) “That to such texts only aesthetic criteria are relevant, not epistemological norms or standards”. Point 1) pronounces Ankersmit’s postmodernism in the sense that text have no inherent meaning and that historians therefore can assign to them whatever meaning they wish. Point 2) seems to present the case that Paul Roth has made in a review of Ankersmit’s MTR: While the logical part of Ankersmit’s work is commended as being coherent he is criticised for not giving historians any common ground to work on³²⁴. It is inapplicable as a theory of history, since its disconnected from the ways we form knowledge of the past in theory and language³²⁵. This is because aesthetics does not contribute to our common idea of objectivity but is subjective. Beauty being a matter of taste. Roth expresses an attitude similar to that which Bertrand Russell initially had of Leibniz’s metaphysics³²⁶. Namely that while coherent, nothing useful is gained from this logic of representation: “Historical texts belong in all key philosophical respects to the same shared world that other empirical, nonfiction disciplines explore”³²⁷. The claim is that Ankersmit misinterprets analytic philosophy of language and that his separation of historical meaning from the meaning in regular language is an unnecessary and harmful move to make.

³²¹ Zammito 2005, 160.

³²² Jonathan Menezes suggests that Ankersmit carries an unfortunate stigma in this since he genuinely aligned himself with the postmodernist movement during the 1980’s, but this was before the movement’s historical incarnation “tried to direct us towards the ‘end of history’ as historians and/or theoreticians knew it”. traditionally”. See Menezes, p. 6.

³²³ Stanford, 234.

³²⁴ It is difficult to separate here what exactly is “logical” and what is “practical”, though what I nowadays tend to associate with the former is the idea that texts are complete concepts or individuals while the latter comes about as the semantics of historiography. Logically speaking the text has no meaning, is simply symbolises a represented. In practice, multiple symbols give meaning in a relativist fashion.

³²⁵ Roth, 549.

³²⁶ See f. 89.

³²⁷ Roth, 565.

While I feel the points given in Stanford's book well describe the general attitude philosophers aligned within the analytic philosophy of 20th century would have towards Ankersmit, they do not find their target if Ankersmit's points are taken seriously. It's of course possible to see in Ankersmit some degree of postmodernism and question the applicability of his theory, but one should always keep on mind that what he is proposing is a descriptive theory of theory. He's describing historical debate as it occurs in the form of representations, hoping perhaps to encourage philosophers of history to better focus on what is essential in their work. Consider case 1). It is true terminologically, since for Ankersmit the text is a meaningless sign³²⁸. However, failing to see the underlying Leibnizianism of Ankersmit's work will cause this generalisation to lead to misunderstandings. While representations are connected to how Ankersmit identifies *historical reality*, it is in the representations themselves only so far as these representations are related to other representations. If the representations had inherent meaning, this would be the downfall of historical debate in general. Historical reality is the product of debate, or rather is approached in it. Representations only come into being as meaningful entities after they are positioned into the representationalist universe amongst other representations. This process takes place unconsciously in the realm of historical research, in which Ankersmit does not conflict with any of his critics. Intentionally the historian is always organised and is free to apply whatever theory seems useful and in fact this must be done. Representationalist logic, applied in historical research would lead precisely to the absurdities that it is accused of by Roth and Zammito. Theories and logics can indeed be seen to help decipher signs along with the emotional content the metaphors contained in the text evoke, they facilitate the historical experience and the historian's monadic perception of the representationalist universe where all respective representations exist. Representationalist logic provides no means of doing these things. It can simply explain what the historian does in *history-writing* the historical debate that is parallel to *history-writing*³²⁹.

And while 2) is also true on the level of history-writing, there is much more to it than this. The problem is essentially the same as with 1). The distinction between the realms of historical

³²⁸ WEM, 10 – 14.

³²⁹ In NL, chapter VIII section 3 Ankersmit explains that narrative logic in itself cannot tell the historian how to write the text. It can only describe what the text logically amounts to. The supposed value of narrative logic lies elsewhere.

research (the phenomenal) and history-writing (the noumenal) is ignored. Critics like Roth do not take into account how deeply Ankersmit's ideas run parallel to those of Leibniz. And one can hardly blame them, since while generally appreciated, Leibniz's metaphysics is not widely known, let alone applied. Some aspects of Leibniz's philosophy, such as his writings on what Raili Kauppi identified as his intensional logic even might suggest that Ankersmit is thoroughly un-Leibnizian in this. But this is incorrect, since intensional logic, as we commonly know it, is applied only in historical research and epistemology. Critics like Roth easily miss the point that Ankersmit's intention is not to evict modern logic and epistemology from history. It is as if Ankersmit himself did not stress the distinction he is making, enough. As with Leibniz, Ankersmit's focus is on the *noumenal*, and the phenomenal – ever important in practice – covered only briefly, as he leaves it for others (the hermeneuticists, narrativists, positivists etc.) to study. Leibniz needed to account for the noumenal in his metaphysics with the *Monadology*. However, he could never dispose of his metaphysics of corporeal substances. He continued to need it even after formulating his idealistic metaphysics, because he wanted his philosophy to explain the phenomenal too. To the extent that Ankersmit refers to historical research aside from historical representation the same is true of him as well.

We saw in the previous section Ankersmit's unquestionable commitment to relativism in the level of representation. If this makes him a postmodernist, then he would not deny it. Ankersmit thinks that nobody in their right mind would deny that the past took place. He does not mean to claim that there is no truth in history. There certainly is on the level of statements. But "the renaissance" exists nowhere but in our minds. You don't point telescopes at it and if you had asked Erasmus about it, he would have told you to get out. And though we talk about it, it only has phenomenal existence just as was the case with the town in §57 of the *Monadology*. But this does not mean that the "renaissance", as a personal *historical experience* is not real for us, or that our representations of it are not real and could not produce other real experiences and contribute to our better understanding of the past. From this perspective, I could well say that Ankersmit is postmodernist when it comes to the phenomenal reality of texts as representations, but not when it comes down to the noumenal as the experience of historical reality. With Ankersmit and historiography it is not the case of "anything goes"³³⁰. Paul Feyerabend committed to the idea embodied in this

³³⁰ Feyerabend, Paul 1975: *Against Method*.

slogan since he believed that in science no theory must be excluded, lest we risk missing out on important insights to be tested. But history is different³³¹. In “ontological objectivity” this applies. But in historical debate, Ankersmit thinks that” historical ‘points of view’ — which determine, as we have seen, the entire structure of narrative accounts of the past — may often be inextricably tied up with political or ethical values. Many narrations lose their internal consistency when robbed of the political values which structure them”³³². In later account he argues that historical language is representational. It is meaningless in terms of epistemology. The *aspects of the past* that are represented in texts exist thanks to the notion of the sublime, which eventually defines the past in his philosophy of history. Whatever worth one sees in the notion of sublime, if any, Ankersmit clings to it and it is difficult to criticise him since alternative theories of this important aspect of our connection with the past, are scarce, to say in the least.

Jouni-Matti Kuukkanen has expressed dissatisfaction with Ankersmit’s notion of holistic representation when it comes to historiography, since it seems to suggest that removing a sentence from a history book will change the cognitive message contained in it³³³. The book would then represent a different narrative substance or different aspect of the past. A counterintuitive notion since anyone would say that there are critical and less important parts in a text and for a historian involved in a debate removing some of the latter would have little difference. And indeed, from the point of view of epistemology, this is true. Historians write texts statement by statement. They will reflect on their source-material, look up previous research and reprocess their ideas and discoveries. The text is a meaningful whole made up of smaller meaningful parts that often have little relevance considering the whole. Ankersmit himself says as much:

Since the historian himself will be aware of many of those already existing meanings, he will construct his sign in such a way that other experts on the text’s subject-matter can be expected to contribute to

³³¹ See *History as the Science of the Individual*. History deals with individual representations of the past while science focuses on the universal.

³³² NL, 221.

³³³ Kuukkanen, 75. Daniel Fairbrother has defended Ankersmit’s vision within the confines of narrative logic by addressing it’s Leibnizianism, claiming that in the narrativist universe statements are analogous to the monad and their meanings are defined by God, i.e. the historian. I think that while this analogy may provide insights to the workings of historiography, it is not one that Ankersmit had in mind. He specifically refers to Narrative substances as analogous to monads and to statements as the properties of NSs. In the level of statements meaning strictly follows the conventional epistemological route and this is why Ankersmit necessitates a double-function for statements as seen in NL on p. 95, 187 or 191. See Fairbrother 2017.

it a meaning coming as close as possible to the one he gives to it himself. Hence, to what one might call its 'intentional meaning'.³³⁴

For Kuukkanen himself, the concept of rationality is central in explaining how historians come to a shared understanding over how to interpret the past. Generally speaking, in his *Postnarrativist philosophy of historiography* historical texts are seen as attempts to persuade the readership (other historians) to accept their interpretation of the past as a justified based on shared rational criteria. He explains that historians communally commit to rhetorical, epistemic and discursive standards that present a shared set of values that all commit to on the basis of rationality³³⁵. Further, Kuukkanen argues that historians need to look for a middle-ground between objectivity and subjectivity in their work and rationally *justify* their conclusions to the community of historians³³⁶. In *Ankersmit as a Rationalist* he showcases that he understands the scope criterion Ankersmit presents it in NL and WEM, and therefore he probably has a grasp of what I explain to be the answer.

Historical rationality for Ankersmit is indeed built around the Leibnizian concept of infinitesimal calculus. According to the scope criterion and the analogy drawn between *history-writing* and calculus, the historian is involved in a sublime act of seeking the local minima and maxima of the representation that is figuratively seen as a function. There's an infinity of possible outcomes and yet the historian must eventually choose only one. And the one chosen will be published and will forever remain the historian's testament about her *historical experience* she not only presented to contemporaries, but also leaves for later generations. To each text there is only one correspondent configuration of statements in the *narrativist universe*. This rule is absolute, since no demarcation criterion can be given about how many statements could be removed from a narrative substance while still calling it the same narrative substance. Such demarcation would compromise the logic³³⁷. But it would not compromise the "cognitive message". Think again of the representationalist universe and a book written on history of the middle ages. Changes made to the text would certainly shift the representations position within a cluster of other representations. Dramatic changes

³³⁴ WEM, 16.

³³⁵ Kuukkanen 2015, 199.

³³⁶ Kuukkanen 2015, 197.

³³⁷ Ankersmit, F. R. *A Dialogue with Jouni-Matti Kuukkanen*, 47 – 48.

would shift it out of the cluster altogether, and historians would eventually begin to question whether the texts is about medieval history.

The exact relationship between the notion of calculus and aesthetics/metaphor is no doubt difficult to fathom at first. From the point of view of Ankersmit's philosophical notion of the sublime, we are powerless to resist the fierceness of *historical experience*. We simply experience reality what is most coherent, most beautiful and strive to realise it. The represented of a historical writing is in experience and the historical facts all share are analogously reduced to the role of technique and material an artist uses to realise the whole of aesthetic representation. Then again, when viewing the representations made by others we again sublimely see the past as something suggested by our historical experience. The representation is same for all, but the array's of representations at our command are different, so to speak. We are all gods in the sense that we create the phenomenal universe of historical reality, but unlike Leibniz's God, who has *all representations* at his disposal, we are each limited to a finite amount. But eventually the point is that we can expand our "repertoire" of representations on any given topic – we can increase the amount of them in any cluster in the representational universe – and thereby become through hard work experts in a given field of study.

Daniel Fairbrother reads Ankersmit in terms of his Leibnizianism and has defended Ankersmit's position against Kuukkanen's critique presented in *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*³³⁸. He writes:

Ankersmit is not committed to saying that the meaning of a statement is *only* dependent on its bare position in the textual whole. This would be implausible – and thoroughly unLeibnizian. According to Leibniz, a monad's role in the universe, and thus its identity, requires it to have qualities of its own, but which nonetheless come from an independent source – from God. Analogically: the sorts of meaning a statement is able to have, and thus the sort of position it is able to occupy in a text, must in some sense be *derived* from external contexts.³³⁹

I think there is a problem here. A statement's meaning is indeed the product of something external to it in Leibniz's intensional logic, but this is utterly irrelevant when we are discussing historical representation as Ankersmit promotes it. Fairbrother is taking the Fregean route

³³⁸ Fairbrother 2017, *Leibniz and the Philosophical Criticism of Historiography*.

³³⁹ Fairbrother 2017, section 3.2.

here in Leibnizianism and attaches sense on to statements. Sense that is dependent on contexts as it is in the Dummett-interpretation of Frege³⁴⁰. One can naturally do this, and in a later text called *The Soul of Historiography* Fairbrother introduces his own brand of Leibnizian holism. One that has promise of actual application in historiography by presenting statements representing ranges of possibilities as parts of an aggregated narrative that has a *soul* blown into it by the historian. Fairbrother, I think, follows an alternative way of interpreting Leibniz's substance theory as his idea is reminiscent of the Leibniz's earlier theory of substantial forms³⁴¹. But his monad analogy fails in Ankersmit's case since it's drawn between the statement in a text and the monad³⁴². Puzzlement is expressed over "how we are to *navigate* – and through what medium – between the details of a text's 'universe', how monads 'mirror' it, and how they give us 'access' to it". I.e. how can we get to the meaning of a text from looking at segments of it, as Ankersmit seems to suggest that we can in one chapter in HR.

I think this is not what Ankersmit is talking about in the citation³⁴³. It is not the property of the monad that reflects the whole of the monad. It is the monad that reflects the universe representational universe. Ankersmit applies the notion of the monad analogically to narrative substances and thus narrative substances reflect the narrativist universe. Narrative substances are ways of seeing the universe/past. What Ankersmit is talking about, in the citation Fairbrother refers to, is not narrative logic per se, but what follows from this logic. It is not the analogy between monad and the narrative substance under inspection. It is the analogy between the historian and God. The distinction is difficult to make, because monads, as points of view, are perfectly known by God. God can, figuratively, "jump from monad to monad" to see the universe from where he pleases, just as the reader of a realist novel can jump from the point of view to another between the characters in the novel. Points of view of characters in a realist novel are the pre-condition of objectivity that the reader achieves

³⁴⁰ Dummett, 6 – 7. Dummett says that in Frege's *Grundlagen* the principle is given that terms only have meaning in the context of sentences. Sentences only have meaning in the contexts of their texts. Ironically, the idea is exactly the same in Ankersmit's philosophy with the exception that texts are the fundamental pieces that are essentially meaningless. It is the relations of texts that is the context for Ankersmit.

³⁴¹ Garber, Daniel 2009: *Leibniz: Body, Substance, Monad*.

³⁴² Whereas, as we should recall, Ankersmit's case is that only the indivisible whole text is analogous to Leibnizian substance.

³⁴³ HR, 216.

about the universe of the novel. Similarly, the discipline of history, Ankersmit argues, can only achieve objectivity through perfectly subjective accounts of history.

As was the case with Roth, Fairbrother's suggestion that Ankersmit's theory has no application then misses its point in the sense that Ankersmit's purpose is only to facilitate debate in philosophy of history and in the discipline of history by providing a rigid definition for what history and historical writing are³⁴⁴. It is of course reasonable to question whether there are any benefits in thinking the way Ankersmit does. Clearly there are none in the level of historical writing itself. They may be found only in our debates concerning finished writings of history. It is here that Ankersmit acts as someone who tries to even the field and make philosophers of history recognise that their work is only possible in reflection to that of others. Or that objectivity is the result of subjective accounts reflecting one another. I believe he thinks that realising this would make philosophers of explore alternatives more readily. This suggestion is supported by Ankersmit's lamentations over the dividedness of contemporary philosophy of history into specific schools of thought that he says have little meaningful communication between them³⁴⁵. Rational and honest philosophical debate between these paradigms is not taking place by his account. And what follows is that there is no real philosophy of history. He has also written about how "historical theorists also prefer to address each other instead of new and real problems"³⁴⁶. He is encouraging debate that goes beyond attempting to convince others of the superiority of one's own view and encourages us to constantly seek new (and also find again, I suppose, forgotten) representations that fit our current needs.

In PR, Ankersmit writes of the virtues of compromise in politics. I won't go into a detailed elaboration of this here, but the basic point is that if we always seek consensus, we end up with these cliques that currently he thinks exist within the discipline philosophy of history. What should be striven for, is compromise. In compromise, we not only come to agreement on what is the best way of "seeing as" concerning a given topic, but this also leads to new

³⁴⁴ In Fairbrother 2018b the same reflection is given on p.403.

³⁴⁵ In WEM, p. 3 – 4, he says: "Now, the state of affairs in contemporary philosophy of history is that causalists talk to causalists, hermeneuticists to hermeneuticists and narrativists to narrativists. The preliminary question of who is right about historical knowledge and how it is expressed is thus abandoned for the subsidiary question of who stands strongest within each individual paradigm".

³⁴⁶ Ankersmit 2003, 433.

representations that none held formerly.³⁴⁷ Good debate is not about sticking inside the borders of one's paradigm and arguing for its acceptance in a consensual manner. It's about reading everyone's representations and reflecting all of them to some genuine problem the human kind is facing. He want us to return to the "Golden Age of theory, when exciting and provocative theories were fired off in a breathtaking tempo and hotly discussed by everyone--"³⁴⁸. History is political and politics is historical for Ankersmit and this is how it should be. The ironic thing is that there has been little compromise in his own work, other than terminological shift and the more pronounced role of *experience* in work after NL, but this explained by his theory being intended to be the framework and condition for these compromises. Whether such debate is possible is a good question.

³⁴⁷ PR, 208 – 211.

³⁴⁸ HR, 2.

Conclusions

F. R. Ankersmit's philosophy of history features three distinct categories. *Historical research* is epistemological. It deals with historical theory and language and logic as they ordinarily are thought of in analytic philosophy. *History-writing* is the most prominent part of his work and it is explained in terms of representation and aesthetics. Finally, there is *historical experience*, which could be called the metaphysics of his system. The latter two categories have been Ankersmit's focus all his career, while the first one is only referred to when establishing how the latter two are distinguished from it. Ankersmit has himself explained how a better general understanding of Leibniz's philosophy would make his own work more approachable.

I have here attempted to show how all these categories can in fact be explained in terms of Leibniz's theory of substance. While *historical research* is potentially analogous to Leibniz's ideas about corporeal substance, Ankersmit generally expresses little interest in it. Instead, his focus is on the idealistic metaphysics presented in Leibniz's monadology. In this system the notion of substance is simple, unextended, and complete in the sense that it is an individual utterly independent of outside influence apart from God. On the other hand, substance in the monadology is defined as perception, sometimes conscious, as is the case with souls. This dichotomy is central for Ankersmit's theory of *historical representation* as he argues that the main product of historiography, the historical narrative, is analogous to Leibniz's substance. It is an indivisible individual and therefore requires to be thought of as a whole and evaluated in aesthetic terms instead of traditional analysis. On the other hand, with the theory of *historical experience* the status of the monad pure experience is central. These two aspects are for him two sides of the coin that is his philosophy of history. Finally, just as Leibniz's discovery of the calculus had a profound effect on his metaphysics, so it is important in the application of Ankersmit's representational logic. The notion is applied analogically in Ankersmit's explanation of what the historian aims at in writing of history. It also explains how philosophers of history collectively may decide upon which representation of a given topic is best.

In chapter I I presented Ankersmit as someone who ardently continues the tradition of historicism by transforming it in from a theory of historical ontology into one of historical

representation. He believes that in historicism only can we currently find the makings of true philosophy of history. What once was a philosophy about things in the past became in his hands a theory of how we see the things in the past, and thus collectively create historical reality based on our *historical experience* of it. From Ernst Cassirer and Dietrich Mahnke Ankersmit claims to inherit his interpretation of Leibniz's metaphysics, in which the role of the monad is analogous to a function. Cassirer and his philosophy of symbolic forms provides useful insights in understanding the way Leibniz thinks. Like symbolic forms, Ankersmit's historical representation, instructions for ways of ordering reality/the past. This connection, as well as Cassirer's philosophy in general in respect to philosophy of history, should be an interest for future research.

Leibniz's intensional logic is present implicitly in Ankersmit's acceptance of any logic as the basis of historical research and the logical level of statements, Leibniz's *characteristica universalis* was essentially an envisioned complete intensional logic meant as a philosophical language of scholars to use for communication and discovery. Ankersmit would locate it in the domain of epistemology, as was the case with Frege's logic. Ankersmit is committed to all historical theory as far as historical research is concerned. Were theory and language not applied, experience would be left formless and historiographical representations could not come to existence because there would be nothing to form them with. In terms of Leibniz's theory of substance, corporeal substances may be thought of as analogous to texts as was seen to be the case in a logic where the meaning of a complex text may be thought of as a function of the meanings of lesser parts. But while intension and the Leibniz's predicate-in-subject -principle help define the text as a whole, the analogy drawn between narrative substance (representation) and the monad makes it indivisible, and thus unanalysable.

Aesthetically the situation in the former paragraph is comparable to the situation that if there were no technique, painters could not create paintings. Or if any sort of musical notation had never been invented, we'd probably be in no position to enjoy the music of Ludwig van Beethoven. However, artists do not paint or create scores to showcase their technique (or at least we should hope they do not do this exclusively). Rather, they do these things to give form to their experience of things. But regardless of this, the only thing that remains to us is the musical notion or the painting and the same applies essentially to historiography. Once I finish writing these conclusions and upload it, this thesis will forever be regarded a

representation by Ankersmit's standards (though logically speaking the text always existed already in the narrativist universe and I have simply individuated it). At the same time, however, it's the experience that dictates the form of a *representation*.

In chapter II I have attempted to explain first the notion of *historical experience* and then its relationship with *historical representation*. Ankersmit sees in *self-identity* the origin of historicism. We define ourselves through our personal histories. This, for him, gives the model for historiography. Further definition of experience interprets the monad as "*experience without a subject of experience*"³⁴⁹ and this gives him the opportunity to establish in *sublime historical experience* a connection between historical ontology and representation. They are two sides of the same coin, and Ankersmit describes it followingly: "Leibniz's philosophy of representation offers the synthesis of uniqueness (i.e. of the monad's point of view) with universality (i.e. what is seen from that point of view). This is how Leibniz ties together logic and metaphysics"³⁵⁰. In Ankersmit's historical ontology pure experience is noumenal and representations are phenomenal. In historical representation the representations as meaningless signs are noumenal and any meanings about them is phenomenal. We experience the past in *sublime historical experience* under which a category such as temporality is meaningless. In historical experience we supposedly establish a connection with the past by realising the its distance from the present. *Sublime historical experience* is collective, and this explains why we have interest in the same topics in history and makes it possible. We share what we think is most meaningful about the past. Just think of the French Revolution. Though we are numerous generations removed from the event, it still carries immense meaning for our lives, through history. A prime example of a traumatic event that gives us the sublime in Ankersmit's account.

Since experience is given form by not only theory and language, but also "moods and feelings", it is always subjective. Additionally, even though our ways of experiencing the past are only possible due to theory and language, experience is the more fundamental category. Experience gives us *aspects of the past* and how experience come about can be explained either epistemologically or representationally. The first approach is unsatisfactory, because of the qualitative aspect of experience itself. Representational meaning inherent in is

³⁴⁹ Ankersmit 2003, 431.

³⁵⁰ *Conversation with Tamm*, p. 502.

paradoxically a truly universal and objective account of meaning while epistemological meaning is not. This gets us to the point of historical representation and calculus. In chapter III I explored how the Leibnizian notion of calculus was applied in Ankersmit's philosophy. I also provided an explanation for his interpretation of how Leibniz applied it in the formulation his metaphysics. Ankersmit draws another analogy to explain history-writing as representation. This time it was between Leibniz's God and the historian. Both are beings that create and sustain things. God makes the monads into independent and free entities that he only continually maintains. That is the miracle in his philosophy. Leibniz's perfect creator never needs to intervene in reality, once it is set into perfect harmony.³⁵¹ Ankersmit's historian is like God, but he's not perfect. He only has a finite amount of representations at his disposal. Yet, both analogously apply the calculus in defining the meaning of a given representation. God can perfectly derive the meaning of any one thing. But this is impossible for the historian. There is no calculus of the humanities and therefore instead historians seek the "maxima" and "minima" of the figurative "functions" of historical topics though aesthetic means and this requires trial and error. The analogy between history-writing and calculus can thus do nothing more but define the act. It cannot advice the act.

If we call back to mind the "representational universe" described in chapter III, we might say that God sees no difference between the representational universe and the actual one, when he locates something in the other, he does the same on the other, since *he sees everything from everywhere*. Alternatively, we can say that all knowledge is for God in Leibniz's thinking analytical, while human beings need the notion of contingency due to their imperfect ability to reason. The historian can be said to have many points of view at his disposal concerning some topic, yet he is forced to evaluate new representations in relations to those known before and situate the representation into a "cluster" of proximate representations in the fictional representationalist universe. And the same is true of any representation. His own or someone else's. He experiences something and this is the noumenal reality of the past for him. Thereafter he writes a text that best represents this aspect of the past. There is no reason to be baffled at whether it is the situating of the representations among others he does or turning his experience into a representation, because both these processes are the same,

³⁵¹ Aho & Roinila, 358. The 13th point made in Leibniz's third letter to Clarke explains how God's limitless foresight ensures this.

described in different ways. Ankersmit's aesthetic follows Nelson Goodman and Arthur Danto in that he understands history-writing as the act of substituting an aspect of the past in our experience with the representation, which is the text. Doing this well requires what I have described the "aesthetic intuition". One need to be familiar with many other representations concerning a certain topic or collective historical experience in order to be able to make of it a representation that answers our collective questions about it.

Beyond establishing these analogous connections between the philosophies of Leibniz and Ankersmit, the value of this paper is, hopefully that it can make help readers understand Ankersmit's philosophy better and shed some light on the goals of Ankersmit's work. Something many readers seem to miss. I now think of him as an analogy of Leibniz himself. Both these philosophers play the role of scholarly conciliators between different opposing schools of thought. Both seek to provide their respective disciplines with a fully coherent "first philosophy", Leibniz with his idealistic metaphysics and Ankersmit with his logic of history, which begins neither with experience nor representation, but is best understood – I believe – as an interplay of both. The representations we create with various methods, are meaningless until we apply our own methods of interpretation on them and they give us experience. Yet experience in itself is noumenal, containing in it all the (epistemologically) inexplicable subjective and qualitative aspects that make life interesting and give it meaning, and it is in its terms of experience that we write history by representing it.

Metaphorically speaking Ankersmit has never been a crusader that walks into the community of historians as a claimant to truth, attempting to gain followers. He is rather like a warden, standing outside this community, guarding it against such would-be crusaders³⁵². His philosophy is meant for philosophy of history, where he hopes to inspire what he thinks is genuine debate as I described it at the end of chapter III. He has encouraged historians to adopt a more subjective stance in their writing. This is because he feels contemporary historiography lacks daring and has been reduced to feeble description without attempt to give the past meaning. I think he has a very good point here, as the days are long gone when political office holders turned to historians for advice. It's quite rare that one hears about a

³⁵² In a reply to his critics Ankersmit writes: " I have an innate dislike of all fads, fashions and of what is pompously announced as the inescapable "new paradigm"; I always feel an irresistible urge to react to such vociferous claims with a cold-shouldering and sceptical 'well, we'll see about that'". See Ankersmit 2018, 489 – 490.

historian being turned to for advice by holders of political offices. Instead, experts on finance, and empirical science have a much stronger position here. Ankersmit has extended his philosophy to political representation as well, and this is a situation he would wish to reverse.

For the individual historian Ankersmit's philosophy can teach humility and respect towards the well-argued and factually valid opinions of others. Since representational logic defines objectivity in terms of relations between existing representations, it reminds the historian that any historical period or topic can never be thoroughly understood. Rather it is the case, that we understand the past in terms of our subjective experience of it, even while most of the established facts about the past remain the same. It should also remind us of the importance of looking at all the previously made suggestions of what a certain period of the past or historical subject of was like for its subjects. "Ankersmit's Leibnizianism" is unsurprisingly one of those subjects that have not been explored enough and I occasionally felt there was little to reflect on during the process of writing. Hopefully in time this too will be remedied and the community of historians shall have a better idea about both Leibniz and Ankersmit and the relations of their philosophies.

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Attachment I

Theorems 1 – 9, 11, 12, 14 – 17, 18, 38, 47, 51, 57, 58 and 61 of the monadology. In difference from the list provided by Ankersmit in *Narrative Logic*, which he claims are applied in his book, theorems 14 – 17 are my additions.

All cited theorems and instructions below are from Bennett, Jonathan 2017: *The Principles of Philosophy known as Monadology*. Translation with remarks. Original text by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz 1714. Electronic document. Url: <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/leibniz1714b.pdf>

[Brackets] enclose editorial explanations. Small ·dots· enclose material that has been added, but can be read as though it were part of the original text. Occasional •bullets, and also indenting of passages that are not quotations, are meant as aids to grasping the structure of a sentence or a thought. Every four-point ellipsis indicates the omission of a brief passage that seems to present more difficulty than it is worth.

1. My topic here will be the monad, which is just a simple substance. By calling it ‘simple’ I mean that it has no parts, though it can be a part of something composite.
2. There must be simple substances, because there are composites. A composite thing is just a collection of simple ones that happen to have come together.
3. Something that has no parts can’t be extended, can’t have a shape, and can’t be split up. So monads are the true atoms of Nature—the elements out of which everything is made.
4. We don’t have to fear that a monad might fall to pieces; there is no conceivable way it could •go out of existence naturally.
5. For the same reason, there is no way for a simple substance to •come into existence naturally, for that would involve its being put together, assembled, composed, and a simple substance couldn’t be formed in that way because it has no parts.
6. So we can say that the only way for monads to begin or end—to come into existence or go out of existence—is •instantaneously, being created or annihilated all at once. Composite

things, in contrast with that, can begin or end •gradually, through the assembling or scattering of their parts.

7. It doesn't make sense to suppose that a monad might be altered or re-arranged internally by any other created thing. Within a monad there's nothing to re-arrange, and there is no conceivable internal motion in it that could be started, steered, sped up, or slowed down, as can happen in a composite thing that has parts that can change in relation to one another. [The passage from here to * is not by Leibniz. It makes explicit what was presumably at work in his mind when he made his remarkable jump.] That rules out every sort of influence that one might think a created thing might have on something else. (I stress 'created' because of course I don't rule out God's affecting a monad.) Some philosophers have held that one thing can affect another by sending an 'accident' across to it, understanding an accident to be an instance of a property as distinct from the thing that has the property. According to these philosophers, in addition to the •universal property heat and the •particular thing this poker there is a •particular property, an instance, an accident, namely the heat of this poker; and they hold that when the poker is plunged into cold water which then becomes warmer, the poker sends an accident—some of its particular heat—across to the water. Now, you might think that although a created thing can't cause re-arrangements in a simple substance it might be able to affect it in a different way by sending an accident across to it. And because you might think this I should add that * monads have no windows through which anything could come in or go out! And •anyway, quite apart from the imperviousness of monads to them, these supposed migrating accidents are philosophical rubbish: accidents can't detach themselves and stroll about outside of substances!. . . . So neither substance nor accident can come into a monad from outside.

8. Monads, •although they have no parts, must have some qualities. There are two reasons why this must be so. (1) If they didn't have qualities they wouldn't be real things at all. (2) If they didn't differ from one another in their qualities, there would be no detectable changes in the world •of composite things. Here is why. [Leibniz starts the next sentence 'If monads had no qualities,' but this is obviously a slip.] If monads all had the same qualities, they would be indistinguishable from one another (given that they don't differ in any quantitative way, e.g. in size). That would make all composite things •such as portions of matter indistinguishable from one another also, because whatever is the case about a composite

thing has to come from its simple ingredients. ·Even if every portion of matter were exactly like every other, there might still be variety in the material world through differences in patterns of distribution of portions of matter in empty space. I think there is no empty space—the extended world is entirely full, a plenum·. So, assuming a plenum and no qualitative variety, any moving around of matter would only result in each place containing something exactly like what it had contained previously, so that one state of things would be indistinguishable from another.

9. ·That shows that some monads must be qualitatively unlike some others; but now I go further·. Indeed, every monad must be qualitatively unlike every other. That is because in Nature no two things are perfectly alike; between any two things a difference can be found that is internal—i.e. based on what each is like in its own nature ·rather than merely on how they relate to other things, e.g. where they are in space·.

11. From what I said in 7 it follows that natural changes in a monad—·ones that don't come from divine intervention·— come from an internal force, since no external causes could ever influence its interior.

12. But in addition to this ·general· force for change ·that is the same in all monads·, there must be the detailed nature of the ·individual· changing simple substance, this being what makes it belong to one species rather than another.

14. The passing state that incorporates and represents a multitude within a unity—i.e. within the simple substance— is nothing but what we call •perception. This must be carefully distinguished from •awareness or consciousness, as will become clear in what follows. [‘Awareness’ here translates aperception. French had no noun for that job (nor did English), so Leibniz coined the aperception on the basis of the verb phrase *s’apercevoir de*, which meant and still means ‘to be aware of’.] In that the Cartesians failed badly, entirely discounting perceptions whose owners were not aware of them. That made them think that the only monads are minds, which led them to deny that animals have souls ·because those would be simple substances below the level of minds· Like the uneducated man in the street they confused a long stupor with death, ·whereas really a long period of unconsciousness is different from death· in the strict sense. This led them further into the

Aristotelians' wrong belief in souls that are entirely separated from any body, as well as confirming misguided minds in the belief that souls are mortal.

15. The action of the internal force that brings about change—brings the monad from one perception to another— can be called •appetition. Appetite cannot always get the whole way to the perception towards which it is tending, but it always gets some of the way, and reaches new perceptions— that is, new temporary states of the monad.

16. A simple substance that incorporates a multiplicity— that's something we experience in ourselves. We are simple substances, and we find that every perception we can be aware of—right down to the least of them—involves variety in its object; and a perception representing variety in the object that it is of must itself be variegated in some way. Thus everyone who accepts that the soul is a simple substance should accept this multiplicity in the monad, and Bayle oughtn't to have found any difficulty in it, as he did in the article 'Rorarius' in his Dictionary.

17. It has to be acknowledged that •perception can't be explained by mechanical principles, that is by shapes and motions, and thus that nothing that •depends on perception can be explained in that way either. Suppose this were wrong. Imagine there were a machine whose structure produced thought, feeling, and perception; we can conceive of its being enlarged while maintaining the same relative proportions among its parts, so that we could walk into it as we can walk into a mill. Suppose we do walk into it; all we would find there are cogs and levers and so on pushing one another, and never anything to account for a perception. So perception must be sought in simple substances, not in composite things like machines. And that is all that can be found in a simple substance—•perceptions and •changes in perceptions; and those changes are all that the internal actions of simple substances can consist in.

18. [The word 'entelechy', used in this section, is a Greek label that Leibniz gives to monads, especially when he wants to emphasize the monad's role as a source of power, energy, or the like. He connects it here with the monad's 'perfection', apparently meaning this in the sense of completeness, self-sufficiency, causal power. In 62 he will connect 'entelechy' with the monad's central role in the life of a body of which it is the soul.] We could give the name 'entelechy' to all simple substances or created monads, because they have within them a

certain perfection. . . .; there is a kind of self-sufficiency which makes them sources of their own internal actions—makes them immaterial automata, as it were.

38. That is why the ultimate reason for things must be in a •necessary substance which we call 'God'. The details of all the •contingent• changes are contained in him only eminently, as in their source. [To say that x contains a property 'only eminently' is to say that x doesn't literally have that property, but does have the resources to cause things to have it. For example, God is not politically astute, but he contains political astuteness eminently.]

47. Thus God alone is the basic unitary thing, the original simple substance. All created or derivative monads are produced by him. They are generated by the continual flashes of silent lightning (so to speak) that God gives off from moment to moment—flashes that are limited •in what they can give only• by the essential limits on what the created things can take in.

51. How can the states of monad x explain the states of monad y? Not by x's having a •real influence on y, for that is impossible. All that x has with respect to y is an •ideal influence, which works through the intervention of God. When God is setting things up at the outset, monad x reasonably demands, in God's mind, that God take account of x in designing y. That is how x's states explain y's: it has nothing to do with real causal influence of x over y, which is something a created monad could never exert.

57. And just as the same town when seen from different sides will seem quite different—as though it were multiplied perspectively—the same thing happens here: because of the infinite multitude of simple substances it's as though there were that many different universes; but they are all perspectives on the same one, differing according to the different points of view of the monads.

58. And that is the way to get the greatest possible •variety, but with all the •order there could be; i.e. it is the way to get as much perfection as there could be.

61. And in this respect composite things are analogous to simple ones. •In the world of composites, the world of matter•, everything is full, which means that all matter is interlinked. •If there were empty space, a body might move in it without affecting any other body; but that is not how things stand•. In a plenum [= 'world that is full'], any movement must have an effect on distant bodies, the greater the distance the smaller the effect, •but always some

effect. Here is why. Each body is affected by •the bodies that touch it, and feels some effects of everything that happens to •them; but also through •them it also feels the effects of all the bodies that touch •them, and so on, so that such communication extends indefinitely. As a result, each body feels the effects of everything that happens in the universe, so that he who sees everything could read off from each body what is happening everywhere; and, indeed, because he could see in its present state what is distant both in space and in time, he could read also what has happened and what will happen. . . . But a soul can read within itself only what is represented there distinctly; it could never bring out all at once everything that is folded into it, because its folds go on to infinity.