11

LEIBNIZIAN IDEALISM

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1. Introduction

According to most interpreters, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) held a strong form of idealism according to which simple mental substances and their features exhaust fundamental reality. Leibniz called these substances *monads* (from the Greek word *monas*, 'one' or 'unit'), and he assigns them two main features: (i) perceptual representations, and (ii) tendencies to move from one set of representations to the next. In more traditional interpretations of Leibniz, although monads are ultimately immaterial and non-located, material reality and everything in it derives from them and their two main features (Adams, 1994; Baxter, 1995; Rutherford, 1995, 2008; Cover & O'Leary-Hawthorne, 1999; Duarte, 2015, 2017; Look, 2010, 2013; Look & Rutherford, 2007: pp. xix–lxxii; Mercer, 2001; Pearce, 2016; Puryear, 2016; Sleigh, 1990; Whipple, 2017).

Not all interpreters entirely agree with this assessment. Some argue that Leibniz held non-idealist views (Arthur, 1998; Bolton, 2004; Broad, 1975; Fichant, 2003; Garber, 1985, 2009; Hartz, 1998, 2007; Hartz & Wilson, 2005; Jolley, 1986; Lodge, 2014; Loptson, 1999; Loptson & Arthur, 2006; Phemister, 1999, 2005). Others argue that Leibniz's views developed substantially over time or that he never clearly settled on one side or the other (Garber, 2004, 2005, 2009: pp. 382–388; Hartz, 2007; Lodge, 2005; Wilson, 1999). Recently, McDonough (2013) has argued that Leibniz remained deliberately non-committal between idealism and non-idealism and that his deeply held views were compatible with both. At the heart of these disagreements lies Leibniz's treatment of corporeal substance.[1] Despite Leibniz's frequent claim that the universe ultimately boils down to monads, he also sometimes appears to say that the world's fundamental furniture includes extended, corporeal substances. Was Leibniz an idealist, then, or not?

I do think Leibniz was an idealist. John Whipple (2015, 2017) argues compellingly that some of the apparently anti-idealist passages in Leibniz stem from a range of rhetorical and pedagogical strategies meant to bridge the gap between his idealism and the non-idealism of his interlocutors. When we factor in these strategies, as well as the wider body of work, it seems to me much more likely than not that Leibniz was a firmly committed idealist, especially in his later years. However, even if we grant that Leibniz was an idealist, difficult questions remain about his particular brand of idealism. In this chapter, I try to offer, in the sense of Rutherford

(1995: p. 3), a systematic interpretation of Leibniz's idealism. This only means that I will try to construct a statement of Leibniz's idealist metaphysics that Leibniz himself would recognize, in a way that doesn't simply overlook or dismiss some of the main interpretative problems. So I aim to offer neither exhaustive reconstruction nor detailed exegesis. I simply aim to offer an accessible overview of Leibniz's idealism along traditional lines.

Some contemporary metaphysicians have become disconnected from the history of their subject and, as a result, fail to appreciate both the systematicity of metaphysics and the relevance of figures like Leibniz for their own research. After all, Leibniz lived before important advances in both science and metaphysics. He predates special relativity and quantum mechanics, the existence of entire fields like neuroscience, and the more recent fads and developments in philosophy, from possible worlds semantics to grounding. What, then, could Leibniz possibly teach us? But this attitude rests on a confusion: none of these scientific or philosophical developments threaten the main contours of Leibniz's metaphysics. And we shouldn't forget that Leibniz himself discovered the calculus, formulated the notion of a possible world, offered his idealistic metaphysics as a thesis about the grounding of the material in the immaterial, and made more important advances in more fields than anyone since Aristotle.

Contemporary metaphysics also seems to have forgotten an important feature of metaphysical inquiry that Leibniz and his fellow early moderns deeply valued as a guiding principle. An answer to one question presupposes a range of answers to many more (Segal, forthcoming). In practice, if not in belief, we have lost sight of the systematicity of the metaphysical enterprise. We have much to learn from the early moderns' general approach, and from Leibniz's in particular. Consider Robert Merrihew Adams's assessment of Leibniz's importance for systematic philosophical theorizing:

> Leibniz's theory of monads, in its essentials, though not in all its details, represents an important, permanent metaphysical alternative, one of the handful of fundamental views in this area that has a real chance of being true.
>
> (Adams, 1994: p. 5)

Since idealism has once again showed signs of life, Leibniz's systematic metaphysics should remain a critical source for both insight and inspiration. But even for those of us who strongly dislike Leibniz's system, its sheer explanatory power minimally provides an opportunity to moderate our confidence in the naturalistic worldviews with which we now seem so taken.

In section 2, we'll begin where Leibniz began: the problem of the continuum. Then, in section 3, we'll cover the monads as Leibniz's solution to that problem. In subsequent sections, we will examine Leibniz's views about the relationship between monads and the material world, especially in connection with material bodies and corporeal substances.

2. Monads

Questions about the ultimate constitution of matter lead to puzzles that Leibniz called the 'labyrinth of the continuum.'[2] To bring some of these puzzles to light, suppose that a cake sits between us. Presumably, some imaginary line divides the cake in half. Given one of those halves, another line presumably divides it in half once more. If this went on indefinitely, would we eventually arrive at indivisible pieces of matter?

An indivisible piece of matter would either be extended or unextended. If it were unextended, it would be a geometric point. But here, we run afoul of Leibniz's idea that nature never makes leaps (Leibniz, 1923: VI., vi., p. 56; Leibniz, 1996: p. 56). Unextended points

could not compose extended material objects without such a leap. So if there are indivisible chunks of matter, they cannot be unextended points. However, no indivisible chunk of matter can be extended either. For Leibniz, what is extended is divisible, by definition. So it appears that matter is infinitely divisible.

We typically think that any piece of matter inherits its being from the indivisible bits of matter that constitute it. But if matter actually divides to infinity, from where does matter's being ultimately derive? This question, and others related to it, ultimately led Leibniz to posit immaterial mind-like substances – the monads – as the grounds for extended material reality. In a letter to De Volder in 1704, Leibniz claims that the monads alone provide a resolution to puzzles stemming from the composition of the continuum (Leibniz, 2013: pp. 286–287). And, later, in the *Principles of Nature and Grace*, Leibniz claims that, without monads, no composites would exist at all (Leibniz, 1989: p. 207). What are monads, then? And how do they account for extended material reality?

To solve the problem of the continuum, Leibniz posited substances that do not inhabit extended material reality but from which extended material reality itself results.[3] So these substances, the monads, ultimately have neither material parts nor locations in space. They have no material parts because they have no parts at all (Leibniz, 1975: pp. 13–14; Leibniz, 1973: p. 175; Leibniz, 1875–1890: VI, p. 598; Leibniz, 1989: p. 207). The monads are simple substances, in other words. However, although monads are simple, they are not simple geometric points. Whereas points have locations in space and therefore sit at some distance from each other, monads lack location and therefore do not fundamentally sit at any distance at all from any other monads (Leibniz, 1875–1890: II, pp. 444, 450–451; Leibniz, 1969: pp. 602, 604).

Though monads are both simple and immaterial, each monad has features that distinguish it from every other monad. Each monad has two sorts of features: perceptual states and internal tendencies to move from one perceptual state to another (Leibniz, 1875–1890: II, p. 270; Leibniz, 1989: p. 181; Leibniz, 1875–1890: II, p. 270; Leibniz, 1969: p. 537; Leibniz, 1875–1890: VI, p. 598; Leibniz, 1989: p. 207). We ordinarily think of perception as involving a causal process beginning from the external stimuli and ending in our experience, with our sense apparatus serving as a causal intermediary. But Leibniz does not think of perceptual experiences as the causal effects of external stimuli. Instead, perception is merely representational or expressive (Leibniz, 1686: sect. 14).

Leibniz infers that perception is non-causal from the simplicity of monads. He writes:

> There is, furthermore, no way to explain how a monad could be altered or changed in its inner make-up by some other created being. For one can transpose nothing in it, nor conceive in it any internal motion that could be excited, directed, increased, or diminished within it, as can happen in composites where there is change among the parts. Monads have no windows through which something can enter into or depart from them. Accidents cannot be detached, nor wander about outside of substances, as the sensible species of the Scholastics formerly did. And so, neither substance nor accident can enter a monad from without.
>
> (Leibniz, 1875–1890: VI, p. 607; Leibniz, 1989: pp. 213–214)

In this passage, Leibniz argues that the simplicity of monads precludes any causal relationships among them. Intersubstantial causation would require that one substance gives or receives something from another substance. But if a monad is truly simple, it has nothing to give. And, by being simple, it lacks the means to receive. As Leibniz famously puts it, monads have

'no windows.' Since monads do not causally interact with other monads, perception does not involve causal interaction between monads either.

Since no external stimulus causes a perceptual experience in any monad, each monad includes, like a roll of film, all the perceptual states it will ever experience. Monads, then, move from state to state by exercising powers that Leibniz variously calls appetites, internal tendencies, and, somewhat remarkably, primitive forces (Leibniz, 1875–1890: II, p. 275; Leibniz, 1989: p. 181). They are 'primitive forces' because, on reality's ground floor, all we find are monads exercising the power to move from one perceptual state to the next. As we will discuss shortly, the familiar forces in physics derive from the exercises of these more primitive monadic forces.

3. Harmony

How, exactly, do physical forces derive from monadic powers?[4] Well, suppose that although the world appears to contain a vast multitude of things, your soul is the only monad in existence (compare Leibniz, 1686: sect. 14; Leibniz, 1989: p. 47). According to Leibniz, monadic souls 'act according to the laws of final causes, through appetitions, ends, and means' (Leibniz, 1989: p. 222). So your soul exercises its internal powers in line with the law of final causes, from one perceptual state to the next. But your perceptual states also represent a mathematically coherent story involving everything from planets and pianos to particles and particle physicists. Within this story, the laws of fundamental physics hold sway. But those laws only hold *within* the story. And they ultimately hold within the story because of the representational content across your soul's successive perceptual states. So there's an important sense in which every material thing is an intentional object represented across your perceptual states (Adams, 1994: pp. 219–223).

Now, let's expand our thought experiment and further suppose that my soul exists in addition to yours. God could, if he so desired, provide us with very different internal theaters, so very different that it appears we inhabit different and completely disconnected universes. But he could also coordinate our internal theaters, not only so that we seem to inhabit the same universe, but also so that we seem to interact with each other. In such a scenario, when I decide to extend an arm with a cup of tea and then see my arm extend towards you with cup in hand, you see an approaching arm with a cup of tea. And when you decide to say, "thank you," then feel the vibrations ripple through your larynx and out your lips, I see your lips move as I hear a "thank you." And so on.

Now we will expand our thought experiment a few times in quick succession. Suppose, first, that God also coordinates the perceptual states of many human souls; then, that he coordinates the perceptual states of the monads responsible for the perceptual states of animals; and, finally, that he coordinates the perceptual states of infinitely many monads, one from each possible perspective within the represented story. These monads may lack consciousness, or *apperception*, but they are mental or mind–like substances anyway because, as monads, they perceive. The result is an infinity of monads whose successive perceptual states tell a vast but coherent story that is reduplicated from every one of the possible perspectives within it (Leibniz, 1989: pp. 220–223).

If material reality results from the representational contents of monads, in what way can we distinguish reality from dreams and hallucinations, which also arise from the representational contents of monads? The stories represented in individual hallucinations or dreams do not mesh with the overall story of the universe represented by the more attentive and sober monads.[5] Whereas the latter monads perceive *real* phenomena, hallucinating and dreaming monads

perceive *imaginary* phenomena (Leibniz, 1875–1890: VII, p. 319; Leibniz, 1969: p. 363). Robert Adams (1994: p. 257) explains:

> Real phenomena are those that form part of a coherent, scientifically adequate story that appears all or most of the time, at least in a confused way, to all or most perceivers. That is the story that would be told, or approximated, by a perfected physical science. Imaginary phenomena are those that do not fit in this story.

Leibniz appeals to the harmony of perceivers to explain both the reality and the phenomenality of real phenomena. Real phenomena are *real* because they appear in the harmonious story. And real phenomena are *phenomena* because they are intentional objects that monads express in that story. But this is not the only way that Leibniz distinguishes that which is 'real' from that which is a 'phenomenon.' This ambiguity has led to some of the thornier questions in Leibniz scholarship.

4. Phenomenal reality

Leibniz consistently distinguishes substances from beings of aggregation. He writes:

> Suppose that there were two stones, for example the diamond of the Great Duke and that of the Grand Mogul. One could impose the same collective name for the two and call them a pair of diamonds although they are far apart from one another; but one would not say that they constitute a substance. More and less do not make a difference here. Even if they were brought nearer together and made to touch, they would not be substantially united to any greater extent. And if, after they touched, one were to join them to another body capable of preventing their separation – for example, if they had been set in the same ring – all this would make only what is called *unum per accidens*. For it is as by accident that they are required to perform the same motion. Therefore I hold that a marble tile is not a complete single substance any more than the water in a pond with all the fish it contains would be, even if all the water and all the fish were frozen, or any more than a flock of sheep would be, even if the sheep were all tied together so that they could only walk in step and so that one could not be touched without all the others crying out.
>
> <div align="right">(Leibniz, 1875–1890: II, p. 76; Leibniz, 1967: p. 94)</div>

Pairs of diamonds, marble tiles, frozen ponds, flocks of sheep – Leibniz categorizes each of these as beings of aggregation, beings that lack the sort of unity that substances alone enjoy (Leibniz, 1875–1890: II, p. 97; Leibniz, 1989: p. 86). Though we will soon have occasion to revise this judgment slightly, the line between true and accidental unities does not lie between some bodies and other bodies, like, say, between living and non-living bodies (van Inwagen, 1990). The line lies between individual monads, on the one side, and aggregates, all on the other. For Leibniz, bodies generally are beings by aggregation and fail to have the true unity that monadic substances enjoy (Leibniz, 1875–1890: VII, p. 344; Leibniz, 1989: p. 319). But if bodies generally are beings by aggregation, then, first, what are they aggregations of, and, second, by what means does the aggregating occur?

These questions have closely related answers, and it is quite difficult to understand one without the other. To the first question, Leibniz answers that bodies are aggregates of monads (Leibniz, 1875–1890: VI, p. 598; Leibniz, 1989: p. 207; Leibniz, 1875–1890: VI, p. 607; Leibniz,

1989: p. 213). And, to the second, Leibniz says that the aggregation occurs mentally, making aggregations something 'semi-mental' (Leibniz, 1875–1890: II, p. 517; Leibniz, 1989: p. 203; Leibniz, 1875–1890: VI, p. 625; Leibniz, 1989: p. 263; Leibniz, 2007: pp. 30–31, 34–35). This might perplex us: how are *material* bodies *mental* aggregations of *immaterial beings*? Here, again, harmony plays a crucial role. Kenneth Pearce writes:

> Co-apprehending the monads, and thereby aggregating them together, must involve representing them as somehow related to each other. But since the entities in question are monads, this relation can only be perceptual. Accordingly, we may say that our body perceptions accurately represent the underlying monads only if they harmonize with the perceptual relations between those monads. A body perception is veridical, and the body in question is therefore real, only if the monads thereby aggregated are in fact related in the way that the concept of body represents them as being related.
>
> (Pearce, 2016: p. 11)

An example may help us tie these separate threads together. Infinitely many monads together exhaust every possible perspective from within my green mug. Although those monads are not themselves located, they each represent a located point of view in the world that coheres with the located points of view of the other monads. Now, when I see the green mug and my located point of view coheres with the points of view represented by the monads 'in' my mug, then I have, in effect, aggregated those very monads in an act of perceiving them. A body like a mug or a chair isn't a unity *per se* but a plurality endowed with unity through the mental lasso of perception.

We may now return to the question left lingering at the end of section 3: in what other senses does Leibniz distinguish that which is 'real' from that which is a 'phenomenon'? The material mug is an aggregate of monads – something that appears as one but isn't really one. It is a phenomenon, then, and not only in the sense that it is an intentional object. As an aggregate of monads, the mug is also a phenomenon in the sense that its being depends on its being perceived as one thing.

Furthermore, in Leibniz's idiolect, the mug *results* from the monads out of which it is an aggregate. According to Donald Rutherford (2008: pp. 179–180), resulting is the converse of an ontological determination relation (also see Puryear, 2016: sect. 3; Look, 2010: p. 874). So, in an important sense, the mug derives its being immediately from the monads aggregated in it. This is why the mug is not only a phenomenon, but a *well-founded* phenomenon (Leibniz, 1875–1890: VII, p. 564). The mug is real, then, not only in the sense that it is serves as a node within the many perspectives woven coherently together into a story. It is also real in the sense that it inherits its being from the bottom floor of reality. That objects in hallucinations and dreams lack this anchor to the monadic floor explains why they are in an important sense imaginary and not real.[6]

Even within this broadly idealist interpretation, some will fill in the details differently or reject key claims and replace them with others. The dual claim that bodies are both well-founded phenomena and aggregates of monads is not easy to understand. But something along the lines I've suggested seems close to what Leibniz had in mind.[7]

5. Corporeal substances

Another major choice point in Leibniz interpretation involves the notion of corporeal substance. Extensionally, the class of corporeal substances includes plants, animals, and living things,

generally (Leibniz, 1875–1890: II, p. 520; Leibniz, 1989: pp. 205–206). Intentionally, Leibniz characterizes a corporeal substance as a monad united with an organic (living) body (Leibniz, 1875–1890: VII, p. 501). Leibniz's remarks about corporeal substances raise two related questions. First, how does an organic body unite with a monad to form a corporeal substance? And, second, in what sense are corporeal substances actually substances? Although monads are unities *per se* and therefore enjoy the rights and privileges of substances, Leibniz sometimes appears to attribute those same rights and privileges to corporeal substances.

We'll attempt an answer to the second question first. In a passage that Robert Adams dates to around 1712, Leibniz claims that a 'substance is either simple, like a soul, which has no parts, or composite, like an animal, which is constituted of a soul and an organic body' (Leibniz, 1975: p. 13; Leibniz, 1973: p. 175). At first glance, this appears as though Leibniz has loosened the entrance conditions for being a substance from being a simple, monadic substance to being *either* a simple monad *or* a composite corporeal substance. But, soon after, Leibniz remarks that since

> an organic body, or any other body whatsoever, can again be resolved into substances endowed with organic bodies, it is evident that in the end there are simple substances alone, and that in them are the sources of all things and of the modifications that come to things.
>
> (Leibniz, 1975: p. 14; Leibniz, 1973: p. 175)

Given this passage, we should resist the temptation to include corporeal substances among Leibnizian substances in the same way that we should resist the temptation to include alleged thieves among those who have actually stolen. Of course, it could be that all and only alleged thieves are thieves. But we would need some additional evidence to justify such a claim. Similarly, we would need some further textual evidence that Leibniz thought corporeal substances were unities *per se*. Leibniz's usage of the term 'corporeal substance' is not the smoking gun in the case for his treating corporeal substances as full-fledged substances.

In some places, like the correspondence with Des Bosses in particular, Leibniz does seemingly entertain the notion that monads in organic bodies bear real, non-mental substantial bonds to one another. But, here, I agree with John Whipple (2017) that attention to Leibniz's rhetorical and pedagogical strategies undermines the view that Leibniz believed such a thing. Furthermore, the term 'corporeal substance' has a venerable history, and Leibniz's adopting that label probably served some rhetorical purposes that do not actually reveal his deeper ontological commitments. For, as Leibniz says in a 1710 letter to Charles Hugony, 'some of my views cannot be presented in a straightforward manner, since people are liable to misunderstand them, not in relation to religion, which is strongly supported, but in relation to the senses.'

How, exactly, would the senses mislead Leibniz's interlocutors? In a 1702 letter to Sophie Charlotte, Leibniz cautiously writes that

> [I]t would not be impossible, speaking with metaphysical rigor, that, at bottom, there should only be these intelligible substances, and that sensible things should only be appearances. However, our lack of attention lets us take sensible things for the only true things.
>
> (Leibniz, 1875–1890: VI, pp. 502–503; Leibniz, 1989: p. 189)

Leibniz seems to admit that idealism conflicts with the commonsensical but naïve idea that sensible objects, and only sensible objects, are the 'true things.' Instead of revealing his full idealist system to those who would misunderstand it or reject it without serious consideration, Leibniz

tries to disclose no more than is necessary and in language that should help readers avoid barriers to understanding. But Leibniz is often unsuccessful and sometimes loses his patience, as he does near the end of his correspondence with De Volder:

> You say that you noticed many surprising things in my most recent letters. But you will perhaps observe that the same views had already been suggested in previous letters, and only prejudice has prevented you from coming to this point some time ago and at long last stopping your search for substances and for the source of forces where it isn't to be found. And so, I was forced to impress certain of my views on you more explicitly, and to respond, if not to what you asked, at least to what you should have been asking.
>
> (Leibniz, 1875–1890: II, p. 275; Leibniz, 1989: p. 181)

I believe Whipple (2015, 2017) has made a strong case about the ways in which Leibniz chooses to reveal his idealist views to those who aren't inclined to share them. But Whipple applies this interpretive strategy primarily to correspondence in Leibniz's later years. So it will be interesting to see whether, and to what extent, Whipple's general strategy can explain away apparently non–idealist statements in Leibniz's correspondence in the middle years and earlier.

We will soon return to the question of whether corporeal substances are really substances. We will first examine the way in which Leibniz believes a monad unites with an organic body to form a corporeal substance. Here, once more, harmony plays a crucial explanatory role.

6. Domination

Leibniz holds that a corporeal substance consists of an organic body united to a monad (Leibniz, 1875–1890: IV, pp. 395–396; Leibniz, 1989: p. 252–253). He also holds that a monad unites with its organic body by *dominating* the monads in its organic body (Leibniz, 1875–1890: II, pp. 251–252). But if monads have no windows and are the only unities *per se*, in what way does a monad dominate the monads from which its organic body results? Although Adams (1983: p. 230) puts monadic domination at 'the center of the gravest difficulties and instabilities in Leibniz's theory of the world,' scholars have devoted relatively little attention to it (see Adams, 1994: pp. 284–292; Look, 2002; and especially Duarte, 2012). Even so, I believe we can formulate a thesis about domination in broad outline that captures the little that Leibniz says about it and that coheres with his systematic metaphysics, as we've understood it here.

To piece together Leibniz's views on monadic domination, we must draw the relevant connections between domination and perception; between perception and perfection; and, finally, between perfection and action. We'll trace these connections quickly before we sketch a view of monadic domination.

Domination-Perception. In the correspondence with Des Bosses, Leibniz says that, 'considered in terms of the monads themselves, domination and subordination consist only in degrees of perception' [gradibus perceptionum] (Leibniz, 1875–1890: II, p. 451; Leibniz, 2007: p. 257).[8] Leibniz believes that perception occurs on a spectrum between confusion and distinctness.[9] So, presumably, the relevant 'degrees of perception' in which domination and subordination consist fall along this very spectrum.

Perception-Perfection. Leibniz also says that a monad 'has perfection to the extent that it has distinct perceptions' (Leibniz, 1875–1890: VI, p. 604; Leibniz, 1989: p. 211). But what does it mean for a monad to be perfect in this sense?

Perfection-a priori. According to Leibniz, 'one creature is more perfect than another insofar as one finds in it that which provides an *a priori* reason for what happens in the other' (Leibniz, 1875–1890: VI, p. 615; Leibniz, 1989: p. 219).

A priori-Action. Finally, Leibniz continues the previous thought by saying that when something has an *a priori* reason for what happens in another, 'we say that it acts on the other' (Leibniz, 1875–1890: VI, p. 615; Leibniz, 1989: p. 219. Also see Leibniz, 1923: VI., iv., p. 1554; Leibniz, 1989: p. 48).

Hence, a monad dominates its subordinate monads because it perceives something more distinctly than they do and, as a result, is more perfect in the sense that it contains an *a priori* reason for what happens in them, which, in turn, renders the more distinctly perceiving monad *active* and the less distinctly perceiving monad *passive*. But why should this be? What is it that a dominant monad more directly perceives? And why does perceiving it more distinctly render it the more active?

Shane Duarte (2012) appeals to final causes to answer these two questions. According to Duarte (2012: p. 241), a dominant monad:

> has a relatively distinct perception of the end that it pursues, which is, unbeknownst to the subordinate monad, also an end to which its own passion is directed. (In other words, the subordinate monad has only a confused perception of the end pursued and distinctly perceived by its dominant monad.)

For example, when my dominant monad decides to raise my hand, the end of raising my hand is, unbeknownst to the subordinate monads in my arm, an end for which they are also put to serve, via the pre-established harmony. And, more generally, monads are ordered by a hierarchy of ends in the realm of final causes. Via the pre-established harmony, what happens in a dominant monad serves as an *a priori* reason for what happens in its subordinate monads.

Although Duarte's account seems generally correct, Leibniz discusses a monad's perception of an end much less often than he discusses the comparatively more distinct perception of its subordinate monads from which its organic body results. So it seems more likely to me that Leibniz appealed to this latter comparative difference rather than the difference in the perception of ends in order to explain a monad's relative dominance.

When Leibniz discusses the relative confusion or distinctness of ideas, he classifies the perception of secondary qualities like colors as more confused and the perception of primary qualities like shapes as more distinct, though still somewhat confused (Leibniz, 1923: VI., iv., pp. 586–587; Leibniz, 1989: p. 24; Leibniz, 1875–1890: VI, pp. 500–502; Leibniz, 1989: pp. 187–188). (Even distinct perceptions are still somewhat confused because they are veridical representations of immaterial and non-extended monads.) So when Leibniz says that 'considered in terms of the monads themselves, domination and subordination consist only in degrees of perception' and that a monad 'has perfection to the extent that it has distinct perceptions,' he likely has in mind the more distinct perceptions of the primary qualities like shape and size. Given the pre-established harmony, a monad with the more distinct perceptions of primary qualities would provide much more restrictive constraints on the monads it ideally interacts with than monads having much more confused perceptions. For an architect of a world with harmonious monads, monads with ideas of where things are, of what shapes they have, and of where they go, provides stronger reasons for the perceptual behavior of other monads, especially ones with only very confused perceptions, like a monad whose perceptual states consist entirely of single colors, say (Duarte, 2009). So, in my view, monadic dominance also involves having these more distinct and, hence, more restrictive perceptions in God's harmonious economy of monads.[10]

Whether monadic dominance owes more to the perception of primary qualities or ends, the dominance relation does not require any causal or extra-mental relation between monads. So although monadic dominance confers a special kind of unity on corporeal substances, that unity falls short of making corporeal substances true unities or substances in the same sense that monads are substances. In the final analysis, then, corporeal substances also fit into Leibniz's broadly idealist worldview.

7. Conclusion

On traditional reconstructions of Leibniz's idealism, monads alone are substances, and the entirety of the material universe results from the harmonious configuration of infinitely many perceptual states. Material bodies are not fundamentally material. And corporeal substances are neither genuine substances nor ultimately corporeal. Instead, material reality is really phenomenal reality. Material reality is *real* because it is anchored into reality's ground floor. But it is *phenomenal* because what's anchored is the coherent story represented from every possible perspective within it.

Though interpretative difficulties persist, Leibniz's idealist system ranks as one of the most comprehensive metaphysical systems ever developed, idealist or not. Careful reflection on its details can reveal deep connections among questions otherwise thought to be quite distinct. But studying Leibniz can provide us with more than just a newfound appreciation for the systematicity of metaphysical inquiry. Since idealism has gone largely ignored over the last century, the relevance of Leibniz's idealist metaphysics for contemporary metaphysics has gone largely unappreciated. As a result, many of Leibniz's insights remain ripe for the picking.

Notes

1 McDonough, 2013: p. 17: 'For roughly the past twenty-five years or so, no topic has more greatly vexed Leibniz's commentators than his treatment of the category of substance.'
2 For more on Leibniz's fascination with these puzzles, see Arthur (1998, 2018).
3 For Leibniz, the notion of resulting behaves like the converse of the contemporary notion of grounding. The derivative features of reality *result* from the more fundamental features that *ground* them.
4 Jorati (2019) argues that Leibniz has a force-first ontology.
5 However, this does not mean that hallucinating and dreaming monads falsify Leibniz's view that all monads perceive harmoniously.
6 Adams (1994: p. 261) notes these two senses of reality for phenomena, with a possible third.
7 For a few recent resources on this topic, see Pearce, 2016; Puryear, 2016; Duarte, 2015, 2017, for an interpretation along different lines.
8 Leibniz does not say that domination and subordination consist only in degrees of 'perfection,' as in the translation given in Adams (1994: p. 285).
9 See Pearce (2016: Sec. 2) for more on Leibniz's distinction between confusion and distinctness.
10 The arguments in Pearce (2016) would present a compelling springboard for future research on monadic domination.

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