

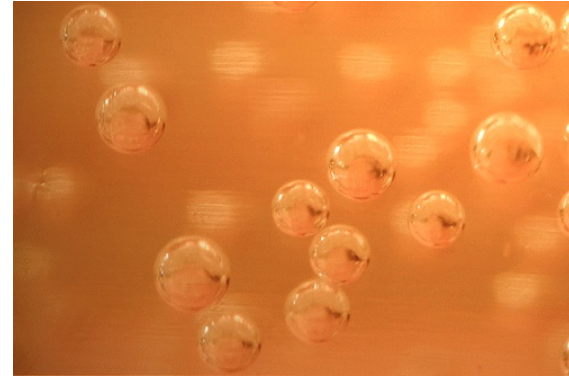
**Philosophy 203**  
***History of Modern Western Philosophy***



**Russell Marcus**  
**Hamilton College**  
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Class 10 - Leibniz's *Monadology*  
More On Monads, Theodicy, and  
the Complete-World View of Substance

# Monads vs Atoms



## ▶ Atomism

The fundamental constituents of the world are identical, unthinking, bodies.

## ▶ Two arguments against atomism

### 1. Machines can not think

- “*Perception, and what depends on it, is inexplicable in terms of mechanical reasons, that is, through shapes and motions*” (M17, 276b).

- There must be some essentially active, essentially perceptive, component to the basic elements of the world (entelechies).

### 2. The fundamental stuff (substance) must be diverse, rather than uniform.

- Perceptions of monads will distinguish them, thus denying the atomist’s uniformity.

## ▶ We were examining the second argument, and how it proceeds through some of Leibniz’s basic principles.

# Leibniz's Second Argument Against Atomism

- There can be no two objects that do not have some internal difference: the identity of indiscernibles (II).
  - ▶ “It is also necessary that each monad be different from each other. For there are never two beings in nature that are perfectly alike, two beings in which it is not possible to discover an internal difference, that is, one founded on an intrinsic denomination” (M9, AW 276a).
- It follows, Leibniz argues, from his two great principles, contradiction and sufficient reason.
  - ▶ “Our reasonings are based on *two great principles, that of contradiction*, in virtue of which we judge that which involves a contradiction to be false, and that which is opposed or contradictory to the false to be true...And *that of sufficient reason*, by virtue of which we consider that we can find no true or existent fact, no true assertion, without there being a sufficient reason why it is thus and not otherwise, although most of the time these reasons cannot be known to us...” (M31-2, AW 278a).
- I'll call the principle of contradiction PC and the principle of sufficient reason PSR.

# Principle of Sufficient Reason (PSR) and Conceptual Containment

- PSR follows from Leibniz's conception of truth as a claim in which a predicate is contained in a subject.
  - "All true predication has some basis in the nature of things and...when a proposition is not an identity, that is, when the predicate is not explicitly contained in the subject, it must be contained in it virtually" (D8, AW 228).
- All true propositions are divided into basic ones, in which the predicate is explicitly contained in the subject, and derived ones, which follow by analysis.
  - Finite analysis gets to necessary truths
  - Infinite analysis is required for contingent truths, so can only be completed by God.
- The identities are known according to PC; their denial is an explicit contradiction.
  - M. David is a married bachelor.
  - M'. David is a married unmarried man.
- Analysis is the foundation of twentieth-century analytic philosophy, having been adopted by Frege, and later Russell, Wittgenstein, and the logical positivists.
- From the theory of truth as conceptual containment, Leibniz argues, we can derive PSR.
  - If some effect did not have a cause, if some truth had no reason, then there would be a claim whose subject did not contain its predicate.

# From PSR to II

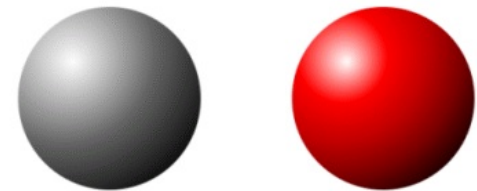
II1. If there were two indiscernible individuals, a and b, in our world, W, then there must also be another possible world, W\*, in which a and b are “switched”.

II.2. But then God could have had no reason for choosing W over W\*.

II3. God must have a reason for acting as he does, by PSR.

IIC. Therefore, there are not two indiscernible individuals in our world.

Simple substances must have distinct properties.

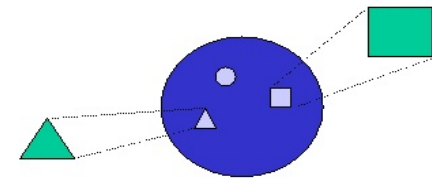


# Perception

- Among the properties of monads, the most essential is their ability to perceive, or express, the world.
  - “One can call all simple substances or created monads entelechies, for they have in themselves a certain perfection...; they have a sufficiency...that makes them the sources of their internal actions, and, so to speak, incorporeal automata” (M18, AW 276b-277a).
- Monads are representative in character; they express the way the world is.
- They express the nature of the entire universe.
- “Since every present state of a simple substance is a natural consequence of its preceding states, the present is pregnant with the future” (M22, AW 277a).

# Monads and Minds

- All monads are mind-like
  - “One can call all simple substances or created monads entelechies, for they have in themselves a certain perfection...; they have a sufficiency...that makes them the sources of their internal actions, and, so to speak, incorporeal automata (M18, AW 276b-277a)”.
- Only some monads have sense perception and memory; these we can call minds, or souls.
- But all monads, being simple substances, have internal causes, independence from other monads.
- They are the causes of their own activity; they are not merely passive receptors.
- Their changes are representations, or perceptions.
- These perceptions are pre-arranged by God, in harmony with the perceptions of all other monads.



Metaphysically, all properties of monads are 'internal' or 'innate' – but many exist as 'expressions' of relations to other monads.

# Perception and Consciousness

- Descartes argued that the essential characteristic of a mind is consciousness.
- Leibniz mainly adopts Descartes's claim.
- Leibniz's class of entelechies is wider than Descartes's class of minds.
- Thus, Leibniz's characterization of the essential characteristic of substance will have to be correspondingly broader.
- The perception of a monad consists in its ability to represent, from its internal state, the entire history of the universe.
- "The passing state which involves and represents a multitude in the unity or in the simple substance is nothing other than what one calls *perception*, which should be distinguished from apperception, or consciousness...This is where the Cartesians have failed badly, since they took no account of the perceptions that we do not apperceive. This is also what made them believe that minds alone are monads and that there are no animal souls or other entelechies" (M14, AW 276a).
- One person's modus ponens is another person's modus tollens:
  - "Can you really believe that a drop of urine is an infinity of monads, and that each of these has ideas, however obscure, of the universe as a whole?" (Voltaire, *Oeuvres complètes*, Vol. 22, p. 434)

# On to the Complete-World View

# Predicate Containment and Complete Concepts

That the concept of any substance has to contain all the properties that might be predicated of it, in order for there to be true predications.

- ▶ “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” (D8, AW 228a)

The substance of Alexander the Great must correspond to a complete concept which will differentiate it from other substances.

- ▶ His substance (his haecceity) contains all of the attributes of Alexander.
- ▶ The concepts may be analyzed down to true predications.



# The Complete-World View of Substance

- The history of the universe, past and future, can be seen in every individual substance.
  - ▶ “When we consider carefully the connection of things, we can say that from all time in Alexander’s soul there are vestiges of everything that has happened to him and marks of everything that will happen to him and even traces of everything that happens in the universe, even though God alone could recognize them all” (D8, AW 228b).
- Consequences:
  - ▶ A substance can begin only by creation and end only by annihilation...
  - ▶ A substance is not divisible into two...
  - ▶ One substance cannot be constructed from two...
  - ▶ The number of substances does not naturally increase and decrease...
  - ▶ Every substance is like a complete world and like a mirror of God or of the whole universe, which each one expresses in its own way (D9, AW 229a).

# The Plenum

the inter-connectedness of the universe and the independence of individual monads

- “Everything is a plenum, which makes all matter interconnected. In a plenum, every motion has some effect on distant bodies, in proportion to their distance. For each body is affected, not only by those in contact with it, and in some way feels the effects of everything that happens to them, but also, through them, it feels the effects of those in contact with the bodies with which it is itself immediately in contact. From this it follows that this communication extends to any distance whatsoever” (M61, AW 280b).
- Universal gravitation (and other field theories) extends the force of one body on others to infinity.
  - ▶ But, such force is often negligible.
  - ▶ It is not clear that Leibniz thinks that the effects of one thing on another is ever quite that small.
- And there aren't really any bodies.

# Bodies

- Bodies are the appearances of monads.
  - That is why monads are not in space.
  - But, there is an appearance of space, which Leibniz takes seriously.
  - Bodies in space are governed by laws of efficient causes.
- Three metaphysical positions
  - A materialist thinks that everything is bodies.
  - A dualist thinks that there are both minds and bodies.
  - An idealist thinks that everything is minds.
- Leibniz is really an idealist.
  - Real world (monads with their appearances/bodies)
  - Phenomenal world (bodies)
  - Ideal world (space and time)
- Organized bodies are divine machines, M64

# Minds

- All monads are entelechies, or souls.
- We are monads of a particular sort.
  - We have simple unity
  - Recall Descartes on the unity of the soul.
- Our minds are governed by laws of final causes.
- The final causes guide their series of perceptions.
  - The life of a monad is like unfolding its inner core.
  - For non-soul monads, the series of their perceptions are all unconscious.
  - But, even for conscious monads, the series is often unconscious, as when we sleep.