

# The Complete World View of Substance

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-  
1716)

# A little background on Leibniz

- German philosopher and mathematician
- Wrote primarily in Latin and French
- A rationalist, along with Descartes and Spinoza
- His views stem from Hobbesian materialism and the New Science/Galilean physics (determinism)

# Review

- **Monad:** what exists (minds)
  - All the real things in the world, stuff that isn't in space
- **Individual substance:** "...when several predicates are attributed to a single subject and this subject is attributed to no other, it is called an individual substance" (AW 228a)...basically a monad
- **Predicate:** an attribute, or property
  - Example—effect is to cause as subject is to predicate

# More review

- **Substance:** essentially a monad, it's simple. The mind is unity. Bodies are composites; they are made of simpler things. But, the individual substances are the atomic pieces.
  - “It also follows that a substance can begin only by creation and end only by annihilation; that substance is not divisible into two; that one substance cannot be constructed from two...” (AW 229a)
- **God:** the explanation of the explanation (physics)

# Determinism, also known as “physics”

- Particles in motion are determined by laws of physics (explained by Galileo, ordained by God)
  - Example—if a rock is thrown into the air, it will reach its peak height, have zero acceleration, and then fall back down

# Leibniz draws on determinism

- In physics, atoms bounce off each other, have a causal relationship
- In the CWVS (complete world view of substance), monads exist
- Monads are independent substances, do not interact, do not take up space, are not made of matter
- Physics becomes a metaphor to explain monads; they have preloaded software/predetermined natures (given by...God!)

# More on monads

- Although monads have minds, they are still determined
- Atoms are to monads as physics is to metaphysics
- Spinoza's rock example

# To help explain CWVS...

- “Since every present state of a simple substance is a natural consequence of its preceding states, the present is pregnant with the future” (AW 277a).
- Billiard balls analogy—each ball (substance) has a complete reflection of the universe
- “each singular substance expresses the whole universe in its own way...all its events, together with all their circumstances and the whole sequence of external things, are included in its notion.”(AW 228b)

# CWVS: breakin it down

- 1. past/present/determinist connections
- 2. relationship between different monads

# Free Will?

- If monads/minds are predetermined, do we have free will?
- The freedom we think we have is just as determined as our bodies by the laws of physics
- Free will is actually an illusion because neurons are firing, and ultimately, because God is omniscient

# Conclusion

- Minds are too complex to be completely determined or explained through metaphysics
- Once a being is conscious of his or her thought process, there is no determining it