

Dissatisfied with Descartes and Spinoza's descriptions of substance, believing they had distorted one's understanding of human nature, freedom, and God, Leibniz synthesis both a teleological (traditional) and mechanical views into a rationalistic worldview that is striking but unconvincing. "...compound substance is the collection of monads. Monas is a Greek word which signifies unity, or that which is one; simple substances, lives, souls, spirits are unities. Consequently all of nature is full of life." His aim is demonstrate that God & teleology are not all passe' in a mechanistic universe: (1) He denies the fundamental relation of extension (substance is primary matter (vs. Descartes; Spinoza); (2) There are no causal relations between created substances; (3) in order to explain universe he appeals to preestablished harmony.

I. SUBSTANCE:

Leibniz accepted Spinoza's single-substance theory & mechanical model of universe but turned Spinozism upside in such a way to speak of individuality of persons, transcendence of God, & reality of purpose & freedom in universe.

A. Extension vs. Force:

Leibniz challenge view by Descartes & Spinoza that theory of substance is built on extension. Descartes assumed extension refers to material substance & is extended in space & is not divisible into something more primary; Spinoza considered extension as an irreducible material attribute of God or nature. actual size & shape. Rather, Observing that the bodies/things we see with senses are divisible into smaller parts, why can we not assume that all things are compounds. **Democritus & Epicurus: all things consists of atoms; irreducible bits of matter.** Leibniz rejected idea of matter as primary. Rather, truly simple substances are "monads." The monads differs from atoms in that atoms are extended atoms; monads are described as "force" or "energy." Thus, matter is not primary ingredient of things, but monads are with element of force constitute the essential substance of things, A "psychic force." A monad resembles the idea a contemp. idea that particles are a special form of energy.

B. Monads are True Substances:

Substance must contain life/dynamic force. Whereas Democritus' material atom would have to be acted upon from outside itself in order to move or become part of a larger cluster, for Leibniz, the **simple substance, the monad, is capable of action.** A compound substance is a collection of monads. A monad is (1) unextended; (2) no shape; (3) no size; (4); a metaphysically existing point; (5) independent of other monads; (6) do not have any causal relation to each other; (7) logically prior to any corporeal forms; (8) true substances; (9) calls them "souls" to emphasize non-material nature; (10) each monad is different from one another; (11) each possess its own principle of action, its own force (their own incorporeal automata); (12) each monad is different; (13) each contain the source of activity within themselves; (14) each is windowless i.e, rest of the universe does not affect behavior; (15) Each relate to one another in terms of a preestablished harmony; i.e., in accordance with each one's created purpose.

C. Preestablished Harmony:

Windowless monads follow their own purpose; form a unity/ordered universe. Even though each is isolated from the other, their separate purposes form large -scale harmony. Ex. Several clocks all struck same hour because they keep perfect time. Leibniz compares monads to "musicians and choirs playing their parts separately, and so placed that they do not see or even hear one another...nevertheless keep perfectly together, by each following their own notes, in such a way that he who hears them all finds in them a harmony that is wonderful, and much more surprising then if there had been any connection between them." (1) Each monad is a separate world, but (2) all activities of each monad occur in harmony with the activities of the others. Such a harmony as this couldn't be the product of an accidental assortment of monads, but must be result of God's activity, whereby this harmony is preestablished.

II. GOD:

A. Existence:

The preestablished harmony of universe provides proof of God's existence with "surprising clearness": "this perfect harmony of so many substances which have no communication with each other":

B. Principle of Sufficient Reason:

For every fact there is a reason why it is so & not otherwise.

C. Evil & Best of All Possible Worlds:

(1) Harmony of world leads Leibniz to argue not only that God preestablished it but also that in doing this God has created the best of all possible worlds. (2) Aware of evil & suffering, he said it was compatible with notion of a benevolent Creator for God could consider all possible kinds of worlds he could create, but his choice must in accordance with the moral a requirement that the world should contain the greatest possible amount of God. (3) Such a world would not without imperfection for God could not give the creature all without making him God; therefore there must be "limitations of every kind." (4) Source of evil is not what God creates, for as these things are finite or limited, they are imperfect. Evil is not something substantial but merely the absence of perfection; evil is privation. This is why he could say "God will antecedently the good and consequently the best," since the most that God can do, in spite of his goodness, is to create the best possible world.

D. Freedom:

How can there be any freedom in the determined preestablished harmonious world having infused specific purposes into the monads He created? (1) Each monad is involved in developing its built-in purpose: "every present state of a simple substance is naturally a consequence of its preceding state, in such a way that its present is big with its future. When our potentialities become actual, we see things as they are; this is what it means to be free. Freedom does not mean volition, the power of choice, but self-development, so that although one is determined to act in specific ways, it is his own internal nature that determines his acts & not outside forces. Freedom means the ability to become what one is destined to be without obstructions, & it also means a quality of existence whereby one's knowledge has passed from confusion to clarity; he knows why he does what he does.

Leibniz's emphasis appears to be upon determinism, upon the notion of a mechanical-like universe, a spiritual machine. While Leibniz does not use mechanical model in describing universe (for if he did he would have to say various parts of universe act upon each other the way parts of a clock affect the moments of each other). Leibniz's explanation is even more rigorously deterministic than mechanical model suggests, for his monads are all independent of each other, are not affected by each other, but behave in accordance with their original purpose which they received from the beginning through God's creation. This kind of determinism is more rigorous because it does not depend upon the vagaries of external causation but upon the given and permanently fixed internal nature of each mode.

III. KNOWLEDGE & NATURE

A. Theory of Knowledge:

(1) A person is similar to a subject in grammatical sense: For any true sense or proposition, the predicate is already contained in the subject. Principle of Sufficient Reason. Thus, to know the subject is already to know certain predicates: "All men are mortal" is a true proposition because the predicate "mortal" already contained the notion "men." (2) Therefore, in any true proposition "I find that every predicate, necessary or contingent, past, present, or future, is comprised in the notion of a subject." (3) Similarly, in the nature of things, all substances are, so to speak, subjects, and the things they do are their predicates. Just as grammatical subjects contain their predicates, so also existing substances contain their future behavior. (4). The principle of sufficient reason regulates all truth; (a) It takes the form of an a priori proof; (b) It is founded on the nature of the subject & predicate terms used in stating the fact.(5) Distinction between (a) truth of reason & (b) truths of fact.

(6) Truths of reason are true by virtue of the law of non-contradiction (for any arbitrary proposition p, both p and not-p cannot be true (e.g., a triangle); (a) truths of reason are tautologies because in such propositions the predicate simply repeats what is already contained in the subject. Once the subject is clearly understood, there needs to be no further proof about the truth of the predicate; (b) They are self-evident truths. (7) Truths of fact are true by appeal to God's choices, or the truth. While truths of fact must also be true by appeal to principle of sufficient reason, we must appeal to Choice of the best (the principle of the best or perfection) Why? These truths are known through experience. Because it can be considered possibly without contradiction, their truth is contingent. The statement, "Eleanor exists" is not a truth of reason; its truth is not a priori. There is nothing in the subject that Eleanor necessarily implies, or makes it possible for us to deduce, the predicate exists. As it stands, the proposition "Eleanor exists is contingent upon some sufficient reason. In the absence of any sufficient reason, it would be just as true to say that "Eleanor does not exist." Whether it will in fact exist depends upon whether there is or will be a sufficient reason for it to exist.

(8) When one considers all the possibilities that propositions about facts imply, a principle of limitation emerges. Whereas some events can be considered possible, simply as the opposite of others, they can't be possible once certain other possibilities that have become actual. (a) God produced the system, by making use of the simplest means and order, produced the greatest richness of effects; (b) Cosmos is a harmoniously & elegantly unified whole; (c) Operates according to principles ordained by God. (9) The universe of acts is only a collection of certain kinds of compossibles, i.e., the collection of the existent possibles. There could be other combinations of possibles that the ones our actual universe contains. The relation of the various possibles to each other requires us to understand the sufficient reason that connects each event to another event. To know its truth requires we discover the sufficient reason for its being what it is.

(10) The final explanation of world, i.e., things are as they are because God willed them to be that way. Having willed some things to be what they are, He limited the number of other possibilities & determined which events can be compossible. (11) Although from our reasoning, propositions concerning world of facts are synthetic, or require experience & verification, if we are to know their truth, these propositions, are from God's perspective, analytic. Only God can deduce all the predicates of any substance. In the end, truths of fact are also analytic. (12) Logic is a key to metaphysics. Thus, "Nature makes no leaps" [the law of continuity] for windowless monads bear in themselves all their future behavior. And as this is true of each monad, all the combinations and possibilities of events already contained in the world also contain the whole future of their world and the sufficient reason for this order is "... the supreme reason, which does everything in the most perfect way."

(13) Although we can't know all reality as God knows it, still, says Leibniz, it contains certain innate self-evident ideas. A child doesn't know all these truths at once but must wait until maturity & for specific occasions in experience when these ideas are called forth. (14) Thus, these ideas become known only on such occasions makes them virtually innate. Still, this doctrine of innate ideas, along with his general treatment of reality, reflect his optimistic appraisal of the capacity of reason to know reality & his belief that from innate self-evident truths considerable knowledge of the real world could be deduced. Comparing the mind a block of marble, the block is veined in certain ways such that our grasp of the law of non-contradiction is innate. It is not necessary that in order for this to be so we must actually assert "not both p and not p." Rather our virtual grasp of this necessary truth is revealed in our assent to such claims as "the rectangular is not the circular."

Descartes on substance: two independent substances: thought (mind) and extension (matter) which led to the impossible dilemma of trying to explain how these two substances could interact as body and mind either in man or in God. Spinoza on substance: Tried to solve dilemma: There is only one substance with 2 knowable attributes: thought and extension. But to reduce all reality to a single substance was to lose the distinction between the various elements in nature. To be sure, Spinoza spoke of world consisting of many modes (thought=beliefs, desires, etc; extension: shape, form, etc), in which attributes of thought and extension appear. However, Spinoza's monism was a pantheism in which "God" was everything & everything was part of everything else. Leibniz thought it blurred the distinctions among God, humanity, & nature; of which Leibniz wanted to keep separate.