

Theodicy and Reason

Logic, Metaphysics, and Theology in Leibniz's *Essais de Théodicée* (1710)

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Receptions of Leibniz's Pre-established Harmony Wolff and Baumgarten

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Abstract In the debate on causality in eighteenth-century Germany, Leibniz's theory of pre-established harmony plays a central role. This theory presupposes important metaphysical assumptions, such as the monadological structure of the world, and represents a radical alternative to the theory of *physical influx*. This paper provides an overview of the debate in the period between C. Wolff and A.G. Baumgarten. While the former is skeptical about the monadology and accepts pre-established harmony as a valid hypothesis only concerning the soul-body relationship, the latter endorses the monadological theory and therefore adopts pre-established harmony in its universal value. A further conclusion is that Leibniz's *Essais de Théodicée* can be taken as a robust point of reference to highlight the main metaphysical topics at stake in this lively intellectual scene.

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1 Introduction

Many historical reconstructions concerning the development of the theory of pre-established harmony and its relationship with the alternative theories of causality consider Kant's pre-critical thought as the highest point of a debate embracing almost two centuries and having in eighteenth century Germany its peak (cf. Watkins 1995, pp. 295-296; 1998, p. 197; Casula 1973, p. 11).

According to Giorgio Tonelli, it is only in his *Monadologia physica* (1756) that Kant is able to characterize in an original sense his theory of simple substance. Until that point this was more Wolffian than Leibnizian, insofar as it distinguished between material and spiritual substances (cf. Kant [1747] 1910, § 6, pp. 20-21; Tonelli 1959, p. 191). Tonelli also argues that the only evidence of Kant's distance from Wolff before 1756 is the admis-

sion of a sort of *physical influx* (Tonelli 1959, p. 191).¹ Nonetheless this view deserves a deeper examination. Indeed, on the one hand, Wolff's position on this point is not always so clear and, on the other hand, a complete assess of its effective influence on Kant requires considering Alexander G. Baumgarten's *Metaphysica*, adopted by Kant as a textbook for metaphysics and anthropology during his whole teaching career.

Mario Casula (1973, p. 22) recognizes Baumgarten as a very peculiar figure synthesizing Leibnizian issues with the rigor of the Wolffian method. Casula stresses two points about Baumgarten: on the one hand, he emphasizes Leibniz's so-called panpsychism within the Wolffian metaphysics; on the other hand, he accepts the theory of pre-established harmony in its general sense, while Wolff takes it as a valid hypothesis only as regards the soul-body relationship.

Though agreeing on both these points, Tonelli suggests to rectify the picture sketched by Casula, since it would be too strong to identify «Wolff's basic position as non-Leibnizian, and Baumgarten's corresponding tenets as Leibnizian» (1959, p. 242). Instead of this stark distinction, Tonelli proposes to recognize two kinds of Leibnizianism: a Wolffian one, textually grounded on the *Système nouveau de la nature* (1695), and a Baumgartenian one, arising from the *Monadologie*. Tonelli provides both a chronological and a theoretical reason supporting this distinction: the *Monadologie* first appeared in German translation in 1720, the same year of Wolff's *Deutsche Metaphysik* (even though the Preface is dated 1719). Accordingly, Wolff seems to have concluded his basic metaphysical work before knowing the *Monadologie* (Tonelli 1959, pp. 242-243). In addition, in the *Système nouveau* Leibniz states a distinction between spiritual and material substances and makes the pre-established harmony derive from the problem of the connection between soul and body (GP IV, p. 485). These are exactly two typical features of Wolff's interpretation.

Casula replies that, even though the *Monadologie* and the *Deutsche Metaphysik* were published in the same year, both the theories of monads and pre-established harmony had already appeared in the *Principes de la nature et de la grâce fondés en raison* (1714). Furthermore, there is no doubt that Wolff was well acquainted at least with the *Essais de Théodicée* (cf. Casula 1979). Today we know that Wolff owned a copy of the *Monadologie* since 1717 through his scholar H. Köhler, who brought it from Wien in 1714 (cf. Lamarra, Palaia, Pimpinella 2001, pp. 59, 94; Poser 2004, p. 58), and it has been suggested that the anonymous Latin translator of the *Monadologie* could be Wolff himself (Lamarra, Palaia, Pimpinella 2001, p. 93). In addition, it has been defended that the ripest expression

1 Bianchi 1996, p. 481, underlines the Wolffian refusal of both physical influx and occasionalism, and the limited admission of pre-established harmony, even if only as a philosophical indemonstrable hypothesis.

of Wolff's theory of simple substance – and of its related consequences concerning the theory of pre-established harmony – must be found in his later Latin *Ontology* (1730) (cf. Soto Bruna 1991, p. 356).

In what follows we will try to show that if Wolff and Baumgarten can be assumed as the main characters within the history of the reception and development of the theory of pre-established harmony, the *Essais de Théodicée* can be considered as the most prevalent reference for this history.

In the *Théodicée* harmony is indeed carried up to signify also the harmony between the reign of Grace and that of Nature.² Accordingly, it is assumed by Leibniz in a more moral and theological sense than in the *Discours de métaphysique*, in the *Principes* or in the *Monadologie*. In the *Théodicée*, harmony is properly a plan concerned with God's rules about the world and his choice of the best among the possible worlds. However, such a perspective *presupposes* a world organized according to the two grounds of pre-established harmony and monadology.³

In order to provide a more detailed exposition of this history, we will also deal with the articulated context of Wolffianism until Baumgarten. Our aim is to evaluate the different positions emerging in the dispute between pre-established harmony and physical influx, which mark – with the 'third way' represented by occasionalism – the philosophical debate in the central decades of the eighteenth century in Germany.

2 Pre-established Harmony in the *Essais De Théodicée* and Its Presuppositions

The theory of pre-established harmony appears in the *Essais de Théodicée* already in the Preface, where Leibniz introduces his main interlocutor, Pierre Bayle. Bayle had discussed the theory in the entry 'Rorarius' of his *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (1820, vol. 12, pp. 588-622, at 608-622). After his exchange with Leibniz,⁴ he turned back to Leibniz's system while attacking the plastic natures proposed by Cudworth ([1678] 1977) and hosted by Le Clerc in his *Bibliothèque choisie*. Bayle contended that unintelligent natures, so as plastic natures, would weaken the theory that holds nature in general to be the best evidence that the universe has an

2 Cf. also *Principes de la Nature et de la Grâce, fondés en raison* (GP VI, pp. 598-606).

3 Such a perspective with reference to the *Théodicée* is effectively developed by Herring 1966.

4 Cf. *Théodicée*, Préface (GP VI, p. 40): Leibniz refers here to his reply to Bayle (cf. Leibniz 1698).

intelligent cause (1705, vol. 3, ch. 21, art. 11). Leibniz takes part in the debate with a note he sends to the *Histoire des Ouvrages des Savants*,⁵ explaining that his system gives reason of the creation of animals without any plastic nature, but only by admitting pre-formation, that is to say, that the seeds, whose organization determines a certain body, already exist in the bodies that generate it, and so on, until the origin (*Théodicée*, GP VI, p. 40; cf. *Principes*, § 6, GP VI, p. 601).

In his *Réponse aux Questions d'un Provincial*, Bayle expresses some doubts about the possibility that God transmits to matter the faculty of organizing itself without transmitting also the knowledge of the whole organization (cf. 1704-1707, vol. 3, ch. 180). This objection astonishes Leibniz, who declares he cannot understand how and why God's power should be so limited (cf. *Théodicée*, Préface, GP VI, p. 41). This is the beginning of an articulated *querelle*, which goes through the whole text and concerns several metaphysical and theological issues. However, here we are concerned with Leibniz's reference to the central role of pre-established harmony, a theory that in this *querelle* is as basic as it was in the solution of the soul-body relationship (cf. cf. *Théodicée*, Préface, GP VI, p. 41). Leibniz states indeed that the pre-established harmony can explain also the agreement between Nature and Grace, the agreement of all things with one another (cf. § 62, pp. 136-137), and even the mutual actions between simple substances, that is, between monads (cf. § 66, p. 139). Now this statement sets the view of the *Théodicée* into a more general metaphysical perspective and turns the attention to the concept of world intended as totality of substances.

First, Leibniz strongly distinguishes between simple and composed substances by calling the former monads. Accordingly, he maintains that the general essence of substances (both simple and composed) consists in action (cf. § 393, p. 350; § 400, p. 354). Since every composed material substance is composed by simple, individual and immaterial substances, whose essence is action, Leibniz concludes that the ground of reality is unity. This means that if what is composed depends on what is simple, what is material depends on what is immaterial and, furthermore, what is not really a unity is not real at all. Only what is *unum per se* as *substantia simplex* is a being in the strict sense. This does not mean that something existing in a different way, for example a body, is nothing, but that the grounds of existence have to be found in the individual substance, namely, in the monad (cf. Herring 1966, pp. 144-145). Thus, in order to achieve a definition of the world, a well founded theory of simple substance is needed.

5 May 1705, art. 9: *Considération sur le principe de la vie et sur les natures plastiques* (GP VI, pp. 539-555).

As it is well known, monads have no direct relationship with one another. This idea is strictly related to the thesis that their essence consists in a spontaneous and representative action concerning the totality of the world and, as a consequence, the other substances: the monad is a mirror of the whole world and the adequateness of its representation is proportional to its perfection.⁶ Such a structure is not compatible neither with physical influx nor with occasionalism. Rather, it deals with pre-established harmony. Insofar as it does not state a direct influx of God nor any interaction between substances, pre-established universal harmony seems to be the most adequate theory for preserving the perfection and stability of the universe since the moment it was created by God.

We will focus here on two of the different meanings of the pre-established harmony expounded in the *Théodicée*, both leading to liminal and challenging possibilities for Leibniz's metaphysics.

The first one dates back to the debate with the Jesuit Tournemine on pre-established harmony between soul and body. In an article published in the *Mémoires pour l'histoire des sciences et des beaux arts*, Tournemine (1703) claims the doctrine of pre-established harmony to account only for the interaction between soul and body, and not for their real union. In his first answer to Tournemine, appeared in 1708 in the *Mémoires de Trévoux*, Leibniz argues that the soul-body relationship, in his own view, can be conceived only in terms of phenomena and that pre-established harmony cannot solve the problem better than Descartes did. Though not denying the possibility of this metaphysical union, Leibniz concludes that it is a sort of 'mystery' (*Remarque de l'Auteur du Système de l'Harmonie préétablie sur un endroit des Mémoires de Trévoux du Mars 1704*, GP VI, pp. 595-596). Furthermore, in a letter to De Volder of 19 January 1706, in which he comments his response to Tournemine (before it was published in the *Mémoires*), Leibniz plainly confesses he cannot conceive a reason accounting for the metaphysical union of soul and body (GP II, p. 281). However, the end of the Preface of the *Théodicée* presents a turning point in Leibniz's treatment of the soul-body union. Leibniz explains that his refusal of the theory of a physical influx between body and soul does not contradict a certain metaphysical union between soul and body, which he calls *suppôt* (*Théodicée*, Préface, GP VI, p. 45). Further definitions of *suppôt* are given in the *Preliminary Discourse*, where it is defined as «a true union between the soul and the body» (*Théodicée*, Discours, § 55, GP VI, p. 81, cf. also *Théodicée*, § 59, GP VI, p. 135). Such a concept seems to have scholastic origins (cf. Look 1998, pp. 512-514), insofar as the main

6 See the *Eclaircissement des difficultés que Monsieur Bayle a trouvées dans le système nouveau de l'union de l'âme et du corps* (GP VI, p. 542), *Discours de métaphysique*, § 9 (GP IV, pp. 433-434), *Monadologie*, § 72-77 (GP VI, pp. 619-620), *Letter to Arnauld*, 23 March 1690 (GP II, p. 136).

characteristic of the *suppositum* is action: «Action pertains to *supposita*». Both soul and body act and their metaphysical union arises from the harmony between their actions, which mutually harmonize as if they belonged to one individual substance, namely, the *suppôt*.

The second meaning of pre-established harmony we will focus on concerns the relationship between different simple substances. In a draft of a letter of 1706 to the Latin translator of the *Théodicée*, the Jesuit Des Bosses, Leibniz raises the problem of the unity «which joins the different simple substances or monads existing in our body with us», so that it makes an *unum per se*, and he admits that he cannot explain «how, in addition to the existence of individual monads, there may arise a new existing thing, unless they are joined by a continuous bond [*vinculum continuum*]» (Bodemann [1895] 1966, Br. 96, Bl. 11). Then, in a letter of April 1709 to Des Bosses, Leibniz adds a new term to the former expression 'metaphysical union': 'real metaphysical union' (GP II, p. 371). No further explanations are given here, but, after that in September 1709 Des Bosses raises the problem of accounting for the transubstantiation, Leibniz introduces the concept of *vinculum substantiale*. He defines it as a much more perfect relation that should be added to real relations, and by which a new substance arises from many substances and adds to them a new substantiality (cf. GP II, p. 438). Leibniz also states that the *vinculum substantiale* unites the monads dominated by one supreme monad, that is, makes an organic body a machine of nature. Although, as a Lutheran, Leibniz considers himself not personally committed to this debate, the *vinculum substantiale* is not simply an *ad hoc* hypothesis, but it has rather a relevance in its own right, especially if compared to the *suppôt*.

Leibniz equates indeed such a unity to the *vinculum metaphysicum* of soul and body, and affirms that it constitutes a *suppositum* (Letter to Des Bosses, 5 February 1712, GP II, p. 439). However, though Leibniz seems here to treat *suppositum* and *vinculum substantiale* as equivalent terms, a distinction should be maintained between them. On the one hand, the *suppôt* arises from its constituents, «matter and form, entelechy and matter, or soul and body», so that it adds no new substantiality and states a pure metaphysical union based on pre-established harmony. On the other hand, the *vinculum substantiale* «is to be considered a new substance-like thing beyond the original group of substances» (Look 1998, p. 519) and it is problematically introduced by Leibniz in order to explain a real relationship between substances, in particular between a dominant and a subordinate monad.⁷

7 Leibniz himself admits the difficulty of conciliating the theory of the *vinculum substantiale* with his previous metaphysical tenets: cf. the response to Tournemine (GP VI, p. 596), and the letter to Des Bosses of 30 June 1715 (GP II, p. 439). Although the metaphysical relevance of the *vinculum substantiale* cannot be denied, most scholars acknowledge the

In his exchange with Des Bosses Leibniz gives more details about the *vinculum substantiale*, which is taken as the ground of the unity of a composite, even corporeal substance. This clearly goes beyond what is stated in the *Théodicée*. In any event, for our purpose we need to highlight that none of these two kinds of relationship denies pre-established harmony. Rather, both of them at least suppose it, though Leibniz was urged to conceive them in response to two objections against this theory (cf. Reinhard 2011, p. 85).

At the same time, in light of the exchanges with Tournemine, De Volder and Des Bosses, Donald Rutherford (1995, pp. 276-277) suggests to be careful in taking the *Théodicée* as the most authentic expression of Leibniz's position concerning the themes at stake. Nevertheless, the investigation concerning the reception of these topics by Leibniz's immediate posterity requires to consider the Leibnitian texts, which at that time were most known and widespread. Therefore, the *Théodicée* has to be fully included in this analysis.

3 Wolff's Conception of Pre-established Harmony

Despite Wolff's reluctance to admit his early familiarity with the *Théodicée* (cf. Wuttke [ed.] 1841, pp. 140ff.; Poser 2004, pp. 57-58), we know that in 1711 he wrote an anonymous review of it in the *Acta eruditorum* (March 1711, pp. 110-121; April 1711, pp. 159-168). Furthermore, he was the copyist of the Leibnizian manuscript since 1707.⁸ Thus, the *Théodicée* has to be considered one of Leibniz's texts that Wolff was earliest and most deeply acquainted with. Moreover, the 1708-1711 phase of the Leibniz-Wolff exchange clearly reveals Wolff's skepticism towards Leibniz's harmonic solution of the relations between primary and derivative force in dynamics. On this basis, let us turn to Wolff's consideration of the monadological problem, which is tightly linked to pre-established harmony as it is treated in the *Théodicée*.

Wolff deals with the problem of the monadological structure of the world and its explanation in terms of pre-established harmony in several works. However, we should focus at first on two assumptions stated in the *Psychologia rationalis* and defining the limits of his adherence to Leibniz. The first concerns the dualism between soul and body (cf. Wolff [1734] 1972, § 44-48), conceived through the argument that body cannot have the main

difficulties in making this concept consistent with the more general picture of Leibniz's metaphysics (cf. Adams 1994, pp. 299-307; Look 1999; 2000, pp. 219-220).

⁸ For a complete history of such a discovery and its consequences in the evaluation of Wolff's debt to Leibniz cf. Tognon 1989.

property of soul, namely, the capability of thinking. Accordingly, Wolff argues that «*facultas cogitandi corpori vel materiae communicari nequit, quam per se non habet*» (§ 46), so that «*anima materialis, seu corpus esse nequit*» (§ 47). He is even more explicit when he quotes Leibniz in order to reject the term ‘monad’ for the simple substances (§ 644n).⁹ This strong discontinuity towards Leibniz’s foundation of the material nature on the spiritual one leads to the second point. Wolff limits indeed the representative activity to the soul ([1734] 1972, § 547),¹⁰ so that the distance between spiritual and material substance is deepened.

The *Psychologia rationalis* can be regarded as the most explicit Wolffian text about the dualism of matter and spirit. It provides also a stance about pre-established harmony as the best theory for giving reason of the relationship between soul and body (§ 639), whose union is significantly defined as a *suppositum* (§ 724). This is not the first time that Wolff takes this theory as possible limitedly to the soul-body union. Indeed, he had already assumed it in the *Deutsche Metaphysik*. Here, however, though rejecting physical influx and occasionalism as well (cf. [1719] 1983, § 765), Wolff claims he is not convinced about the existence of the Leibnizian unities of nature (*Einheiten der Natur*), that is, the monads. Accordingly, he admits the possibility of the existence of monads, but he is still skeptical in admitting the universal harmony between things (§ 598-600). In the notes to these paragraphs Wolff doubts more sharply about the admission of Leibnizian monads and consequently of universal harmony (cf. [1724] 1983, § 215, 216). A clear rejection of monads concerning his theory of simple substance is stated in the *Ontologia*, where Wolff refers to Suarez (cf. Suarez 1597, part 2, disp. 30, sect. 3, § 3; École 2001, p. 123), who defended the distinction between simple and composite substances through the analogy with the distinction between immaterial and material substance (cf. Wolff [1730] 1977, § 684). In this paragraph there is a meaningful point of contact between two crucial frameworks of Wolff’s distance from Leibniz: the separation between spiritual and material world, and the refutation of the Leibnizian monad with its power of representing the whole world (cf. Soto Bruna 1991, pp. 356-357). As an implicit consequence of the second feature, we can easily infer the rejection of the generalized version of pre-established harmony.

Thus, if Wolff restricts the representative power to the soul and, at the same time, he rejects the Leibnizian monad as a simple substance, what are then the characteristics of the simple elements composing material substances? To answer this question, we should refer to the *Cosmologia*

9 For the refusal of the term ‘monad’ see also Wolff [1731] 1964, § 182n.

10 Already in the *Deutsche Metaphysik*, Wolff was skeptical as regards the attribution of a *vis representativa* to any substance (cf. [1719] 1983, § 600).

generalis, where Wolff introduces and describes these elements, which he calls *atomi naturae* (cf. [1731] 1964, § 186, 187n, 216n). While Leibniz's monads are metaphysical points endowed with a representative force, Wolff's elements are physical (but not material)¹¹ points, whose *vis activa* is physical too and not representative (§ 187n, 191, 192, 196, 216n).¹² The former are closed and their only mutual relationship relies on God, while the second have real mutual relations (§ 202, 204-208). In addition, even though the bodies in Leibniz are grounded on simple substances, they cannot be considered as *composed* by simple substances. On the contrary, the Wolffian elements are the last components of bodies (cf. Wolff [1730] 1977, § 793-794; [1731] 1964, § 176; Poser 2004, p. 58).

In other words, in order to understand to what extent Wolff admits pre-established harmony, we need to state the qualitative distinction between the soul-body harmony and the harmony between monads. Accordingly, one should avoid the common mistake of thinking that Wolff admits only the first and does not provide any convincing reason for this choice. Wolff's limitation to the soul-body harmony can be regarded as a simple consequence of his separation between spirit and matter, which marks a distance from Leibniz. The essence of the *ens* as it is described in the *Ontologia* coincides indeed with its logic possibility (non-contradiction), while the atoms of the *Cosmologia* give reason of both the composition of bodies, and the relationships between them. Most importantly, this account is not provided in an ideal, but in a real sense. Indeed, differently from Leibniz, Wolff assigns to the physical substances a generic *vis activa*, putting the elements into a real relationship.

4 Wolff's Disciples and the Physical Influx

As Eric Watkins points out (1998, p. 141), it would be incorrect to consider Wolff as a physical influxionist only because of his reluctance to attribute a representational power to all monads. There are indeed no evidences of Wolff's acceptance of this theory as regards the relationship between material substances. In addition, as concerns the soul-body relation, in the notes to the *Deutsche Metaphysik* Wolff is skeptical about both physical influx and occasionalism ([1724] 1983, § 273-277). Moreover, in the *Psychologia rationalis* he clearly rejects both these theories to the advantage of pre-established harmony ([1734] 1972, § 573-588, 605-611, 622-639).

¹¹ Thus, the 'atomi naturae' are opposed to the 'atomi materiales', insofar as the former have no extension, no figure, no magnitude, they fill no space and so they are not divisible, whereas the latter possess all these characteristics (cf. Wolff [1731] 1964, § 184-188).

¹² Wolff rejects the term monad in the note to § 182, but he admits it a few later in the note to § 187, with the important clarification that his points are physical.

However, it is not clear to what extent Wolff admits the theory of the pre-established harmony. Although he cannot assume it because of his disagreement with Leibniz in taking the monad as a simple substance, there are indeed no certain clues that he adopts an alternative theory. This state of affairs has generated a great variety of interpretations and revisions within the so called Wolffian school, and some of the main developments of physical influx come from authors traditionally considered as Wolffians.¹³

Despite the moderate positions of some Wolffians like Thümmig ([1725-26] 1982) and Baumeister (1739), there are some other Wolff's disciples that defend the pre-established harmony more strongly than Wolff, and with an even more explicit reference to Leibniz than to Wolff. This is the case of Bilfinger ([1723] 1984). He supports the theory of pre-established harmony against the attacks of authors like Bayle and Tournemine, but at the same time he clearly maintains that his adherence to pre-established harmony does not concern the universal version presented in the *Théodicée* (§ 62, GP VI, pp. 136-137).

On a more polemical side, Andreas Rüdiger, in his *Gegenmeinung*, supports the need of a new definition of the concepts of *body*, *soul* and *matter*, and polemically addresses the chapter of the *Deutsche Metaphysik* devoted by Wolff to rational psychology. Rüdiger accepts the postulate that 'no action can occur in another without contact' and, accordingly, he exposes the difficulties arising from the Wolffian separation of spiritual and material substance, since it would prevent the soul and the body to act on each other (1727, § 16). Rüdiger does think indeed that soul and body can mutually interact. In order to explain how this is possible, he proposes a new definition of the essence of bodies as elasticity and identifies extension and creation (cf. § 11). According to him, extension is no longer an exclusive characteristic of bodies, but it also pertains to soul, insofar as it is created. In Rüdiger's view, body and soul belong to the same genus (cf. § 12), and this grounds the possibility of their reciprocal actions, making both Descartes' occasionalism and Leibniz's pre-established harmony useless. Beyond the standard objections against Leibniz's pre-established harmony and Wolff's limited version of it, Rüdiger charges the latter with inconsistency, since Wolff adopts a Cartesian dualism, but systematically confounds physical and metaphysical abstraction by pretending to deduce the properties of bodies (*abstractio physica*) from the metaphysical power of the soul (r2-s2, pp. 37-40).

Another author who was significantly influenced by Wolff on these topics is Johann Christoph Gottsched. The distinction he provides in the first part of his *Vindiciae systematis influxus physici* between the three canonical

13 For a more complete picture of this debate see Watkins 1998, pp. 145-166; Pasini 1994. The most important historical source on this polemic is Ludovici [1737] 1966, 2, § 533-597.

causal theories is akin to the one proposed by Wolff in his *Psychologia rationalis* (cf. Gottsched 1727-1729, 1, § 1-12). In the second part of his work he presents a defence of physical influx as regards the soul-body relationship against the two classical objections. He rejects Descartes' objection to the possibility of an interaction between soul and body - which relied on the heterogeneity of their essence (thought and extension) - by claiming that one would need a more complete account of thought and extension in order to be sure that all the properties of soul and body come from their essences. Against the alleged violation of the law of conservation of the quantity of motion implicated by the physical influx, Gottsched stresses that Leibniz had demonstrated this law - in the formulation given by Descartes and his followers - to be false, insofar as it is not motion, but the *vis viva* that is conserved. Then he adds that the physical influx between soul and body does not contradict even the correct formulation of the law, since the *vis viva (motrix)* in the world is always the same, whether the action of the soul on the body (or vice versa) is actually expressed or impeded by external actions (cf. 2, § 14-15). In the *Erste Gründe der Gesamten Weltweisheit*, Gottsched goes even further by stating his most original argument in favour of physical influx. He proposes to understand the word *influx* not literally (as a 'flowing'), but in a metaphorical sense, as the power of a substance to act directly on another (cf. [1733-34] 1983, § 1067). On this ground, after providing an argument for the physical influx between soul and body (cf. § 1080), he tries to extend this theory to the relations between bodies (cf. § 1081).

This extension is explicitly stated by Martin Knutzen (1735) and Johann Peter Reusch ([1735] 1990), whose works in support of physical influx appear in the same year. The most original feature of their defence consists in their substantial acceptance of Leibniz's and Wolff's assumptions. Nevertheless, they maintain, as Watkins puts it, that «nothing Leibniz and Wolff say prohibits interpreting this 'well-founding' relationship [between simple and composite] as a causal relationship, because the simples are necessary conditions for their composites, just as a cause is a necessary condition for its effect» (Watkins 1998, p. 183).

Knutzen's basic assumption is that the force of moving itself that characterizes the Leibnizian monad implies the force of moving other things (1735, § 28). This is also demonstrated through impenetrability (§ 29). Thus, Knutzen faces the two traditional objections against physical influx and argues that this latter does not imply the migration of accidents from one substance to another, but only a change in the substance subjected to the action of another. Furthermore, Knutzen rejects the objection concerning the conservation of the *vis viva* in the world as not valid for the soul-body interaction by means of a Leibnizian reference: Leibniz deduces indeed this law from the principle of inertia, which cannot hold for the soul (§ 53).

In his *Systema metaphysicum* Reusch argues, like Knutzen, that no force is transferred from one substance into another through influx, but rather that certain new limitations arise through the proper substantial force that is only caused contingently by a substance ([1735] 1990, § 792). Reusch is even more explicit than Knutzen in dissolving the heterogeneity between soul and body by resolving every kind of relation (included the relation between spiritual and material substances) into a relation between the simple substances composing the complex (§ 794).

Knutzen and Reusch are maybe the finest holders of physical influx, since they extend this theory to the relations between physical substances. However, as mentioned, this theory should be considered as only allegedly Wolffian, since the Wolffian texts do not allow room for a strong defense of it.

5 Leibnizian Frameworks in the Defence of Pre-established Harmony: Baumgarten and Meier

The year 1739 marks a turning point in the debate about the causal theories thanks to the first edition of Baumgarten's *Metaphysica*. Baumgarten's main goal is to turn back to a Leibniz-oriented version of pre-established harmony. Accordingly, he defends the theory of pre-established harmony both by recovering some crucial features of the Leibnizian metaphysics neglected by Wolff – as a *vis representativa* for any monad – and by adding to the monad other characteristics, like impenetrability, which are hard to find in Leibniz (cf. Baumgarten 1739, § 398). Thus, in the section of the *Metaphysica* concerning cosmology, Baumgarten deals with the physical influx between monads (cf. 448-451), but he does not endorse it, insofar as it is a real influx. Instead, he thinks the only true influx is the ideal one (cf. § 463). This latter consists in that: the passivity of a substance affected by the action of another substance should be considered at the same time as an action of the passive substance (cf. § 212, 463). This thesis, as well as the picture of the soul-body harmony as a particular application of the more general harmony between substances, is drawn of course from the *Monadologie* (cf. § 52, 78, GP VI, p. 615) but more explicitly from the *Théodicée* (cf. *Théodicée*, § 66, GP VI, pp. 138-139, as regards the bodies cf. *Specimen dynamicum*, GM VI, p. 251; Baumgarten 1739, § 741, 762). As regards the soul-body relationship, Baumgarten attributes to the soul some characters that are hardly reconcilable with the soul's immateriality. Indeed, although the human soul, as a spirit, is immaterial, indivisible, without quantitative magnitude, so that it is not a *phaenomenon substantiatum*, it is nevertheless placed in space, since it coexists with the monads posited outside of itself (cf. § 742-746). According to Baumgarten «a soul with the

body, with which it is in the closest interaction [*commercium*] constitutes an animal», and when this soul (and this body) is human, this animal is a human being (§ 740).

Georg Friedrich Meier, a disciple of Baumgarten, goes even further in the defence and development of pre-established harmony, and devotes to it a treatise. In his positive defence of the pre-established harmony, he shares Baumgarten's opinion, but he proposes new arguments against physical influx. He defines a natural passivity as a harmonious change in a substance of the world that has its reason in another thing (cf. Meier 1743, § 14). Since an influxionist would define every natural passion as a real passion, he would exclude every kind of internal change in the substance as well. However, according to Meier, this would be contradictory, because the real causation between substances cannot occur without an internal change of each substance involved in the causal relation (cf. § 49). The assumption of Baumgarten's distinction between real and ideal influx is determinant here, but Meier adds that the smallest substance (or force) cannot physically act on another, since it would imply the admission of at least two determinations (one in the active and the other in the passive substance) even smaller than the smallest, which would be contradictory (cf. § 51).

Finally Meier provides a development of Baumgarten's definition of ideal influx, stating that its nature is not merely analogical or fictional, but really based on the representational nature of the substance in general (once more against Wolff), and thus on the common nature of substances, insofar as they were created by God from eternity (cf. § 12).

6 Final Remarks

Turning back to the debate described in the introduction, maybe a middle way between Tonelli and Casula is the most suitable. Wolff is certainly not a Leibnizian when he deals with the relationships between material substances, but this is the consequence of his choice of limiting the representative power to the spiritual substance, namely, to the soul. This leads indeed to a sort of Cartesian dualism.¹⁴ However, pre-established harmony is conceived by Leibniz as a unitary concept, which embraces both the soul-body relation and the relation between substances. We can acknowledge that he is mainly concerned with the former, but this is not sufficient to

¹⁴ It has been argued that, about these themes, Wolff was more influenced by Descartes than by Leibniz: see Wundt 1924, p. 48; de Vleeschauwer 1932, p. 676. Cataldi Madonna 2001, p. 17 substantially agrees with this position but is more careful. See also Poser 2004, p. 59, quoting here Campo 1939, p. 276, 284 about the Wolffian refusal of an individualistic and organicist conception of substance.

explain why Wolff hypothetically admits pre-established harmony only in its former application and not in its broader meaning.

Thus, despite the debate about the effective influence exerted by the *Monadologie* on Wolff's thought, we could maintain that the *Théodicée* is one of the most influential texts in Wolff's reception of the concept of pre-established harmony, since it earlier and more widely allows Wolff not only to adopt the soul-body limited version of this theory, but also to assess and reject its broader meaning.

Yet for the same reason the *Théodicée* can be taken, not less than the *Monadologie*, as Baumgarten's main reference in his endorsement of pre-established harmony *tout court*, as it emerges from his defence of the reciprocity of activity and passivity in the ideal influx between substances.

However, in none of these cases it is possible to assess the real weight of the limit-concepts of *suppôt* and *vinculum substantiale* in the reception of pre-established harmony. This holds even more for the *vinculum substantiale*, which was introduced by Leibniz in the exchange with Des Bosses, whose echo on the immediate posterity cannot be compared to that of a printed writing.

Certainly, the richness of this concept in Leibniz's thought is demonstrated by the breadth of its discussion over the following years, a breadth of which Wolff and Baumgarten are probably the most influential pre-Kantian interpreters.

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