

Contributi/3

Intersubjectivity and Transindividuality

Leibniz, Husserl, Deleuze, and the Composition of Worlds (Animal Monadology)

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In his *Cartesian Meditations* (1929), Edmund Husserl proposes a monadological solution to the epistemological problem of transcendental solipsism. At the basis of intersubjectivity lies the lived body (*Leib*). After the famous bracketing of the empirical validity of experience, Leibniz is invoked for a second reduction, meant to determine the sphere of appurtenances that originally belongs to each subject and that accounts for communication with the Other. Husserl thus grounds the constitutive lifeworld in body integrity and possessive individualism, i.e. the ontological distribution of physical properties based on the identity of self-consciousness. By contrast, Deleuze in *The Fold. Leibniz and the Baroque* (1988) discovers in Leibniz a “crisis of property” that reflects the first great crisis of capitalism. Unlike Husserl, who raises the organic intentionalities by which humans are inserted into the world to a transcendental level, Leibniz never managed to find a final solution to the problem of the union of body and soul, precisely because he held the body itself to be a world teeming with non-human others. The problem of the Other refers to a micropolitics of mobile and non-localizable captures rather than individual closures, such that intersubjective monadology is inseparable from an animal monadology with its twin components of animism and totemism. In my contribution I demonstrate how Leibniz’s metaphysical account of composite substances and its 20th century ramifications, precisely because they are fundamentally problematic, could contribute to a contemporary yet non-phenomenological understanding of the transindividual constitution of communities. By contrasting Deleuze’s later reading of Leibniz with Negri’s reading of Spinoza and Balibar’s critique of Leibniz, I demonstrate how the monstrous animality of the baroque socius remains a possibility endemic to the present.

1. Transcendental Constitution and Immanent Composition

As the traditional mediations of community are waning, the problem of the constitution of the common is manifestly in the air. For a long time its privileged approach has been that of post-kantian transcendental philosophy. Although in the 17th century questions of right were often intrinsically related to those of power, Kant and post-Kantian idealism disconnected them in favor of constituent subjectivity, intersubjectivity and symbolic structure. This is still testified to by the importance of communitarian notions such as the lifeworld (*Lebenswelt*) or the *sensus communis* – notions that refer to a monolithic sense of belonging as condition of possibility for all actual communizing and communication. Perhaps it was only with Nietzscheans such as Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze that the immanence of right and power was taken up again. Accordingly, contemporary political theorists such as Antonio Negri and Giorgio Agamben have proposed a reprise of Spinoza's notion of *constituere*. By sharply distinguishing between the constituent power (*potentia*) of the multitude and a historically and institutionally constituted Power (*potestas*), they also draw the political conclusions from the rebuttal of idealist interpretations of Spinoza by the likes of Alexandre Matheron and Martial Guerout.

What makes the concept of constituent power interesting is not only that a materialist approach is substituted for an idealist approach, thus pointing far beyond the humanist horizon, but also that the problem of the constitution of community is no longer posed in classical legalist terms. As Deleuze states in his foreword to the French edition of Negri's *The Savage Anomaly. The Power of Spinoza's Metaphysics and Politics* (1981), Spinoza forms part of an anti-legalist lineage that runs from Machiavelli to Marx, and that is opposed to the juridical lineage that includes Hobbes, Rousseau and Hegel: "Spinoza's fundamental idea is the spontaneous development of forces, at least virtually. In other words, there is no need for mediation in principle to establish the relationships that correspond to forces."¹ The spontaneous development of relations between forces implies that constitution is no longer transcendental but ontological. Constitution equates with what Deleuze calls "composition". A principally incomplete being is effectuated in a thousand singular modalities, each of which equally and immediately participates in the power to be. In a nutshell, the problem of composition or immanent constitution thus reads as follows: "How do individuals enter into composition with one another in order to form a higher individual, ad infinitum? How can a being take another being into its world, but while preserving or respecting the other's own relations and world? And in this regard, what are the different types of sociabilities?"²

Today these questions have lost none of their topicality, even though 'nature' and technology complicate them in new ways. This paper contributes

¹ G. Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness. Texts and Interviews 1975-1995*, tr. by Ames Hodges and Mike Taormina, New York 2006, p. 190.

² G. Deleuze, *Spinoza Practical Philosophy*, tr. by R. Hurley, San Francisco 1988, pp. 125-126.

to their philosophical development by drawing not on Spinoza but on another pre-Kantian philosopher: Leibniz. As we will see, his theory of collective individuation and the autonomy of individuals contains key elements for a contemporary approach to the composition of modern societies, or as Leibniz and contemporary anthropologists alike call them, “worlds”³. Yet his legacy remains contested. On the one hand, there is the continued authority exerted by Edmund Husserl’s phenomenological adaptation of the harmony of monads as the basis of transcendental intersubjectivity⁴. On the other hand, a recent compositionist uptake of Leibniz can be found in Isabelle Stengers’s cosmopolitics and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro studies of Amerindian perspectivism, as well as in the revival of Gabriel Tarde’s monadological sociology by Maurizio Lazzarato, Peter Sloterdijk and Bruno Latour.

The actuality of this divide, as well as the general prevalence of the transcendentalist interpretation of Leibniz, is testified to by Étienne Balibar, who sharply distinguishes between Spinoza and Leibniz in terms of, respectively, the “transindividual” and the “intersubjective”. While neither opposes the individual to the collective, their difference concerns the modality of the reciprocal determination of parts and wholes. The transindividual is a matter of mutual affective implication between individual freedom and collective freedom in interconnected and interdependent processes of individuation. When Spinoza writes that “There is no singular thing in nature than which there is not another more powerful and stronger,”⁵ for example, what is ultimately stronger than any singular thing is the multiplicity of other singular things and conversely, just as what is stronger than any finite multiplicity is a combined unity of forces of which I can be a constituent part. The intersubjective world, by contrast, is a fixed unity (the whole of God’s creation) that is reconciled with individual freedom at the cost of a strict hierarchization of degrees of freedom. Instead of a thoroughly relational account of individual desire and power, so goes Balibar’s account, Leibniz atomized it, allowing only for analogical relations between individuals according to their internal perceptions. He thus pitted individuality against the collective in a zero-sum game, just as, for Husserl, our relationship to the common world would be mediated by the original recognition between *ego* and *alter ego*⁶.

³ For an overview, see for example M. de la Cadena and M. Blaser (eds.), *A World of Many Worlds*, Durham and London 2018.

⁴ See for example R. Cristin, K. Sakai (eds.), *Phänomenologie und Leibniz*, Freiburg/Munich 2000; M. Vergani, *La lecture husserlienne de Leibniz et l’idée de ‘Monadologie*, «Les études philosophiques», 71 (4), 2004, pp. 535-52; D. Pradelle, (ed.), *Lectures de Leibniz: Husserl*, special issue of «Revue de Philosophie», 92, 2007.

⁵ Baruch de Spinoza, *Ethics*, in E. Curley (ed. and transl.), *The Collected Works of Spinoza*, Princeton 1985, book IV, Axiom 1, p. 547.

⁶ Whereas theoreticians of civil society from Locke to Hegel rely on exterior institutions and law, Balibar suggests that Leibniz and Husserl seek the moral community within the interiority of the lifeworld: ‘Husserl invented the latter term [intersubjectivity] by referring directly to him [Leibniz]. It is not in Leibniz a question of actions and passions, but first of all of establishing correspondences between the representative contents of all the monads, which means

The aim here is to propose an alternative, transindividualist reading of Leibniz. Deleuze will remain a key inspiration. Whereas Balibar relies on Deleuze's early study *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* (1968) for his critique of Leibniz, in *The Fold. Leibniz and the Baroque* (1988) Deleuze hints at a Leibnizian critique of the Husserlian theory of embodiment. Husserl seeks to go beyond constitutive interiority by means of the lived body, but still takes the intersubjective lifeworld to be individuated accordingly to strictly monadic essences and their organic appurtenances. As a consequence, he misses what Tarde identifies as the landslide from the problematics of being to that of having as "universal fact."⁷ For as we will see, at the heart of the Leibnizian account of embodiment and social relations lies the discovery of a domain of constantly shifting mereological relations of possession, and thus of a critique of possessive individualism. We do not simply contain multitudes, it is the very relations between inside and outside and consequently between the human and the non-human other that become deeply problematic. After a brief historical situation of Leibniz's position in the debate concerning the question of natural right, we shall focus on his theory of composite substance as a neglected resource in contemporary theories of onto-politics and the composition of worlds.

2. Union: Right and Power

Leibniz is not usually regarded as a political philosopher, let alone one who has inspired revolutionary thought. If his metaphysics can be called "revisionary"⁸, then so can his conception of politics. In reaction to the many crises of the 16th and 17th centuries, his political and diplomatic passions concerned the unification of the Christian world and the revitalization of the practically defunct marriage of the universal authorities of the Pope and the Holy Roman Empire in the *Respublica Christiana*. He sought a "universal jurisprudence" as he put it in his "Opinion on the Principles of Pufendorf" (1706): a system of law and justice common to all the spirits that compose the City of God. In a perfect state, "all goods should be public property"⁹, yet since men do not generally live according to reason, they must be left to provide for themselves and private property must be protected by bourgeois law. "The potential radicalism of Leibniz's theory

that each one of them has a "perception of the world" involving a clear or confused image of all the others. [...] The Leibnizian world includes in itself all conceivable degrees of freedom, from the lowest to the highest, according to a continuous progression.' É. Balibar, *Spinoza, the Transindividual*, tr. by Mark G. E. Kelly, Edinburgh, 2020, p. 73.

⁷ G. Tarde, *Monadologie et sociologie*, ed. É. Alliez, Paris, 1999, p. 89.

⁸ N. Jolley, *Introduction*, in N. Jolley (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Leibniz*, Cambridge 1995, pp. 1-17: 16.

⁹ Cited in P. Riley in G. W. Leibniz, *Political Writings*, transl. and ed. by P. Riley, Cambridge 1988, p. 20.

of justice is thus socially defused; levelling is forbidden, and only a general expansion of the state's generosity is recommended.”¹⁰

If our world is the best of all possible worlds, moreover, this is because it is the product of the cooperation between the divine faculties of wisdom and will. Power, it seems, has no constitutive function in itself, although it serves to “realize” God's design. As Leibniz argues in the *Meditation on the Common Concept of Justice* (1702-3): “Wisdom is in the understanding, and goodness in the will. And justice is a result of both. Power is another matter, but if it is added it transforms right into fact.” In other words, natural right (*droit*) is the result of God's infinite perfection, whereas the legal order (*la loi*) depends on a power by which this world finds its realization without what is best being determined by this power.

If natural right (‘ought’) nevertheless needs a legal order (‘can’) in order to be realized, we may wonder to what extent natural right also presupposes power in its own constitution. Although the order of power (‘nature’) is really distinct from that of wisdom (‘grace’), Leibniz holds that the two are inseparable:

In general, we must hold that everything in the world can be explained in two ways: through the *kingdom of power*, that is, through *efficient causes*, and through the *kingdom of wisdom*, that is, through *final causes* [...] These two kingdoms everywhere interpenetrate each other without confusing or disturbing their laws, so that the greatest obtains in the kingdom of power at the same time as the best in the kingdom of wisdom¹¹.

What guarantees the harmony between the reign of power and the law of grace, given the absolute irreducibility of the one to the other? Does the political moment of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries not consist precisely of an indefinite *suspense* of this order shared by the medieval authorities of divine law and earthly power, like a temporary dissonance awaiting a final accord?

This interpenetration of the orders of right and power can be further analysed in analogy to Leibniz' account of embodiment, which forms the bone of contention between transcendentalist and immanentist adaptations of the monadological account of community. Towards the end of the *Monadology*, Leibniz writes: “In this system bodies act as if there were no souls (to assume an impossibility), and souls act as if there were no bodies, and both act as if each influenced the other.”¹² The soul and the body belonging to the individual each acts according to its form of causality while agreeing perfectly with the actions of the other. Yet the “as if” is precisely what distinguishes pre-established harmony from Malebranche's occasionalism and Spinoza's parallelism. Whereas the latter doctrines merely replace the problem of the union of body and soul, Leibniz puts it at the center of his metaphysics of substance and makes it all the more urgent:

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹¹ *A Specimen of Dynamics*, in G. W. Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays*, translated by R. Ariew and D. Garber, Indianapolis, 1989, pp. 126-127 (henceforth, ‘AG’).

¹² *Monadology* § 81, AG, p. 223.

there are bodily mechanisms and there are spiritual automata, but if they cannot act on one another directly, how are they attuned? There is activity everywhere, but how can it be accounted for if its centers of gravity are not localized in the souls of individual actors alone?

By revoking the Cartesian dualism of two equal substances into a hierarchy of uncountable individual substances, Leibniz transforms the relation of soul and body into relations between monads and composites of monads respectively. Their difference is not between two kinds of substances, but between two ways of distributing the world. Souls are taken distributively and constitute eternal individual unities (each, every). Bodies are taken collectively and are composed as continuously varying multiplicities (one, some). However, since “that what is not truly *one* being is not truly one *being* either,”¹³ it follows that the body is not real. Rather, it belongs to the domain of the possible: “there is an infinity of possible modes [*façons*] that all matter could have received, instead of the sequence of variations it actually received.”¹⁴ Each distinct body is an aggregation of aggregations ad infinitum, like a wave in an ocean of matter conceived abstractly or incompletely. As a mode, it is an “accidental unity”¹⁵ among several monads, each of which possesses an essence that is not a mode. Instead of the romantic conception of society as organically unified, the baroque conceived of the organism itself as a society¹⁶: “what constitutes the essence of a being by aggregation is only a mode of being of the things of which it is composed.”¹⁷

Notwithstanding the inessentiality of bodies, Leibniz rarely subscribes to the idealist conviction that the extended world exists only in monadic perception. And when he does, this happens from the perspective of right, where demand for universal harmony among monadic essences is concerned. In fact, he argues, no soul except God’s can exist without a body that connects it with the rest of the world. The body is precisely the “point of view”¹⁸ of the soul, the soul expresses its own body more clearly than the rest of the world because it expresses its world through its body:

Each distinct simple substance or monad, which makes up the center of a composite substance (an animal, for example) and is the principle of its unity, is surrounded by a *mass* composed of an infinity of other monads, which constitute the *body belonging to* this central monad, through whose affections the monad represents the things outside it¹⁹.

Hence in order for a phenomenon to be “well-founded,” it must not only be in harmony with the perceptions of other monads, there must also

¹³ To Arnauld, 30 April 1687, AG, p. 86.

¹⁴ To Queen Sophie, 1702, AG, p. 191.

¹⁵ To Arnauld, 30 April 1687, AG, p. 88.

¹⁶ C. Kwa, *Romantic and Baroque Conceptions of Complex Wholes in the Sciences*, in J. Law, A. Mol (eds.), *Complexities: Social Studies of Knowledge Practices*, Durham 2002, pp. 23-52, 26.

¹⁷ To Arnauld, 30 April 1687, AG, p. 86.

¹⁸ To Lady Masham, 30 June 1704, AG, p. 290.

¹⁹ G. W. Leibniz, *Principles of Nature and Grace* § 3, AG, p. 207.

correspond to each of the soul's clear and distinct perceptions a composite organ, such that a perfect "resemblance" between internal perception and external bodies is guaranteed²⁰. The "clear zone of expression" of each monad remains insurmountably bound to an order of existence outside of itself but in which perceptual subjectivity is objectively "realized"²¹. One of the central questions of all of Leibniz's metaphysical texts therefore concerns this Gordian knot by which each monad perceives the world "with a perfect *spontaneity* as regards itself, and yet with a perfect *conformity* to things outside it."²²

The knot is further complicated by the claims that God chose a certain world expressed by the individual souls that populate it and that each monad nonetheless freely draws its perceptions from the folds of its own infinite, obscure background. For it implies that, if a soul is free to hallucinate about other possible worlds, it must have access to other perceptions – than those chosen by God – that also strive to exist. On the level of the actualization of the world, the level of divine justice or grace, Leibniz is compelled to exclude the reality of the possible, since what is at stake is precisely God's choice to bring this world into existence as it is expressed by individual souls. While these are isolated and spontaneous insides ("without windows and doors"), their closure is precisely what binds them to the same well-founded phenomena as others, such that only a single possible world is actualized. It is on the level of realization in nature, where harmony depends on organic perspective, that Leibniz allows, either within the organic body or at least open to it, more reality than the soul can express by itself. Here the potential composition of the infinitely divisible mass of monads encompasses all subsisting possible worlds. Aggregates such as clouds, rainbows, herds, crowds, and armies are hallucinations, yet they do not exist any less because of that, even if they may be said to have a lesser degree of unity. For bodies to be well-founded, they must be composed of matter and forms, but most bodies have diffuse forms that are only relatively real. Since the process of realization does not bear on right but on power, a material composition always expresses the potential of a monstrous multiplicity and enfolds other possible worlds within the present world.

It is because the actual does not constitute the real, which must itself be realized in intermonadic relations which, quite unlike monadic essences, encompass all possible worlds, that Leibniz reverts to the artificial detour of pre-established harmony. There is a universal harmony between monads, the "mutual connection or accommodation of all created things to each other and of each to the rest [which] causes each simple substance to have relations which

²⁰ *On the Method of Distinguishing Real from Imaginary Phenomena*, in G. W. Leibniz, *Leibniz's Philosophical Papers and Letters*, edited by L. E. Loemker, 2nd edition, Dordrecht 1976, pp. 363-366 (henceforth, 'L').

²¹ *Leibniz to Des Bosses, 15 February 1712, The Leibniz-Des Bosses Correspondence*, edited by B. C. Look and D. Rutherford, New Haven and London 2007, p. 227, and throughout their 1712 correspondence.

²² G. W. Leibniz, *A New System of Nature, AG*, p. 143.

express all the others and consequently to be a perpetual living mirror of the universe.”²³ But this harmony prevails only among souls and originates in their preformation in God. It does not suffice to guarantee that the order of souls and the order of bodies share the same universe. On the contrary, it is because universal harmony is already in place that monads cannot act on one another, and by implication on their bodies. Instead of the privacy of the soul, which is *intime praesens*, the body is always public, composed of *partes extra partes*. Since our body involves other individual monads, the question is rather how the soul can be immediately present in the body, instead of the other way around. It is a question that concerns the nature and unity of composite substances considered in themselves. Unlike Spinozist parallelism, which holds that the soul is equally hybrid (i.e., existing-by-another) as the body, pre-established harmony demands that each corporeal composite conforms to some principle of mediation of the many by the one. As we will see, it takes us from the internal connection of perceptions within the soul to external relations of belonging or dominance between substances, and also, following the analogy we are pursuing, from natural law to the law of the state.

But for now, let us simply retain that the core problem of Leibniz’s metaphysics, no less than of his theology and politics, is that of the restoration of harmony. It can be rephrased as follows: How is it possible to say ‘my body,’ or rather, how things can be present in one another without losing their unity or integrity? If only the best of all possible worlds is allowed to come into existence, not only must there be a public composite belonging to each private soul, but also a private soul to each public composite. It is this smooth back-and-forth between body and soul that lies at the basis of Edmund Husserl’s adoption of monadology in his account of the constitution of community. Perception would be the representation of an object in perfect conformity with the unity of the organism. However, we are in fact dealing with two irreducible modes of belonging: the body as collective means and the soul as individual end. There is a necessary correspondence between the two orders, but not term by term (hence fortuity). This makes the problem persist: What founds the appurtenance of a single organism to each monad, despite the real distinction between actualization and realization?

3. Husserl and the Overcoming of Transcendental Solipsism

Although his project is the relentless banishment of natural consciousness (the phenomenological reduction) and therefore rules out any dogmatic metaphysics in a pre-Kantian sense, Husserl recognizes in Leibniz an important forerunner of Kant, the latter even “lagging behind Leibniz” when it comes to “the determination of the true meaning of the a-priori.”²⁴ In the fourth and fifth

²³ G. W. Leibniz, *Monadology* § 85, AG, p. 224.

²⁴ E. Husserl, *Gesammelte Werke (Husserliana)*, Den Haag/Dordrecht 1950-, VII, § 27.

of the *Cartesian Meditations*, when struggling with the pre-egological foundations of consciousness such as passive synthesis, the lived body and the problem of the Other, he therefore draws extensively on monadological metaphysics. The question he seeks to answer is: How can consciousness remain identical to itself all the while being inseparable from the processes making up its life?

Like a windowless monad, Husserl argues, the finite Ego expresses or “explicates” itself in the infinite concatenation of its acts and affections as an “immanent transcendence” or “primordial world”. Of course, the monad does not yet possess the synthetic structure of transcendental apperception, but only an analytical principle of subjectivity in its objectivated, substantial form. Analogous to the structure of the Cartesian *cogito*, each state of perception is the objective self-realisation of the subject. But whereas Descartes failed to develop the transcendental pole of subjective life in the full concretion of its unconscious and bodily life, it is the merit of Leibniz’s theory of the monad’s “peculiar ownness” or “habitualities” to have thematised the “following along” of the monad with its own concretion, according to which “with every act emanating from him and having a new sense, he acquires a new abiding property.”²⁵ Hence to say that I perceive the table is to say that the table appertains to the Ego. Intentionality consists of a possession attributed to the transcendence of constitutive consciousness over the thing perceived.

The theory of ownness, however, leads Husserl to a new problem, that of the transcendental Ego which finds itself closed in by solipsism²⁶. If the natural world follows directly from the immanence of the Ego as its intentional correlate, then the original experience of the I, the pole of subjective life, would also be constitutive of the natural experience of intersubjectivity, of the Other. The soul, as Leibniz said, is the synthesis of “first, *myself* who am thinking of a variety of things and then, the varied *phenomena* or appearances which exist in my mind.”²⁷ But this raises the question as to how we pass from immanent or subjective transcendence to the objectivity of ‘our’ phenomena. This is where a notion of *Gemeinsinn* becomes necessary. Without an account of the transcendental Other, it seems, phenomenology cannot gain full access to the world. How can the monad escape from itself?

Leibniz did not have this problem because he had discovered the plurality of monads, as Deleuze says, “at an earlier stage of phenomenological deduction”²⁸. Whereas for Husserl, the ground of the phenomenal world must be subjectivity as such, this is not the case for Leibniz, who looks for the ground of subjective experience in the objective world in which the subjects are embedded. Our experience of the world is necessarily ordered insofar as God first chose the world and then created the individual substances that actualize it. Everything

²⁵ E. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, transl. by Dorion Cairns, Dordrecht 1999 (henceforth ‘CM’), § 32-4, pp. 66-72.

²⁶ CM § 42, pp. 89-90.

²⁷ *On the Method of Distinguishing Real from Imaginary Phenomena*, L, p. 363.

²⁸ G. Deleuze, *The Fold. Leibniz and the Baroque*, tr. by T. Conley, Minneapolis 1993, p. 109.

that exceeds my clear zone of expression and remains dark and obscure in me is the shadow of other monads possessing their own clear zones, all of which converge upon the same world²⁹.

Although this dogmatic coincidence of subject and object is no longer available to Husserl, he nonetheless translates it into the acknowledgement that every monad contains the intermingled life of populations. If all experience is embedded in a horizon-structure of experience, an ante-predicative world consisting of the reciprocally constitutive or “compossible” explications of other monads, then other monads must be harmonically “co-present” in my experience even if I do not undergo this experience myself in an original fashion. In order to account for the subjective act of constitution, we must differentiate between what is possessed by the Ego and what belongs to it but is not possessed by it. A second reduction, conceived as the “disregard of all constitutional effects of intentionality relating immediately or mediately to other subjectivity”, abstracts from all intentionality the “sphere of appurtenance” of my being which delimits what is proper to me rather than the phenomenal world in its entirety. The question then becomes, in Husserl’s own words: “*How* can my ego, within his peculiar ownness, constitute under the name, ‘experience of the alien,’ precisely something *alien* – something, that is, with a sense that excludes the constituted from the concrete make-up of the sense constituting I-myself, as somehow the latter’s analogue?”³⁰

According to Leibniz, each monad expresses or perceives the world according to a clear zone that corresponds to its organic body. For Husserl, similarly, my peculiar zone within the phenomenal field consists of the experience mediated by my “lived body” (*Leib*, the body I am and experience from the inside, distinguished albeit inseparable from the empirically objectified *Körper* that I have and experience from the outside). My organism exists in direct communication with others, but also, because it is the structural dimension of life and consciousness, it is in sharp distinction from them. It is part of my sphere of possessions because, as a means of perception, I experience it in an immediate presence. Yet through my body’s “empathy” with that of another I can apperceive the non-original presence of other Ego’s on the basis of analogy. I experience other monads not through representation within myself, but through “appresentation”³¹. An appresentation of the Other is a “layer” added to the Ego that is no longer part of its sphere of appurtenance and that cannot be brought into full evidence. Instead, each of my self-explications follows an assimilative course in association with the object-constitutions of the Other³². Husserl refers to this “associating” as “pairing as passive synthesis” (*Paarung als passive*

²⁹ Leibniz also speaks of virtual ‘marks’ (*notae*), including both the ‘indications’ (*traces*) of the past and the ‘lineaments’ (*traits*) of the future, that others leave upon me. *Meditation on Knowledge, Truth and Ideas*, AG, p. 25.

³⁰ CM § 44, pp. 93-94.

³¹ CM §§ 49-50, pp. 106-111.

³² CM § 54, pp. 117-120

Synthesis), as “embrace” or “entwinement”³³ of my body (*Leibkörper*) with that of the Other. Although selves cannot penetrate each other, their constitutive acts nonetheless imply a reciprocal horizon-constitution and harmonious “unanimity (*Einstimmigkeit*, resulting from the ongoing co-determination (*Mitbestimmung*) of the objective world)” of their points of view.

The transcendental Ego, according to Husserl, is therefore not windowless and doorless, but rather a “windowed monad”³⁴: it intuits other Egos immanent to its ambient world (*Umwelt*) of established meanings through a non-originary experience mediated by its body, yet is a monad because it still co-constitutes the world only from its own transcendent experience. I explicate myself originally by unfolding the horizon of a communal corporeal being – Maurice Merleau-Ponty with later speak of “the flesh” – that is included in my own essence and that binds the experienced object to me. This free unfolding knows only one crucial “restriction”, namely that “the unqualifiedly apodictic evidence of self-explication brings out only the all-embracing structural forms in which I exist as ego.”³⁵ In other words, the centres of experience can never take each other’s place and each has to remain itself – otherwise hell is the other, as Jean-Paul Sartre said, because in the encounter with another I am decentred from my world. It is only at the condition of such a restrictive being-in-communion that a unity of similarity is constituted – that is, an objective world, common to all, which “must exist, if there are any structures in me that involve the co-existence of other monads.” The second reduction, then, aims at the recuperation of property relations. It does not have to result in solipsism as long as it leads to a material depth or multileveled immanence that realizes pre-established harmony as a real *sensus communis*, a transcendental intersubjectivity that functions as the epistemological condition of the objectivity of the external world, but equally of its real ontological and social constitution.

4. The Problem of Appurtenance: from Closure to Capture

Yet here appears what Deleuze calls “the great gap that will open between Leibniz and Husserl”³⁶. For Husserl, my body serves the process of apperceptive transposition through which I discover the Other. His position is indeed Cartesian insofar as he understands the body as a compromise that allows only for the appresentation of the non-own in contrast to the immediacy of the own. For Leibniz, by contrast, the mind is mostly obscure to itself, such that we must have a body in order for our mind to possess a relatively clear and distinct zone of expression. In reducing pre-established harmony to a problem of intersubjectivity, moreover, Husserl equates the lived body with an organic unity

³³ *CM* § 51, pp. 112-113.

³⁴ *Hua* XIII, Beilagen III, LIV.

³⁵ *CM* § 46, p. 103.

³⁶ G. Deleuze, *The Fold*, cit., p. 107.

that poses no special problems within the Ego's private sphere of appurtenance. For Leibniz pre-established harmony is more complicated. We have already seen how, at the level of souls 'for themselves', a universal harmony organizes the accord between monads that are closed in upon themselves. This does not imply that Leibniz is a solipsist: monads do not actually contain other monads, but their appetitions and perceptions are virtually marked by others whose activity they sense within themselves. Every soul contains in itself a world of diversity and therefore has no need for a window. At the level of bodies in themselves, pre-established harmony does raise the problem of the external reality of intermonadic composites. Although each monad has a body, it is not always the body of *this* monad that is at issue. Our bodies are connected because they exchange parts that cannot be privately owned. Rather, they are continuously analysed and synthesized, de- and re-composed.

[W]e must not imagine [...] that each soul has its own mass or quantity of matter belonging to it or affected by it forever, and that it consequently possesses other inferior living beings forever destined to serve it. For all bodies are in a perpetual flux, like rivers, and parts are passing in and out from them continually³⁷.

This changes the question of embodiment into that of the nature and unity of relations of possession. How can the a priori structure of global harmony materialize in local union? When does having a body become being a body?

According to Leibniz, the external world is made up of what the Scholastics called "secondary matter (*materia secunda*)" or what Leibniz takes to be an infinitely divisible *masse brute*. It consists of the unformed flux of monads chaotically traversing all kinds of interactions and aggregations, its indistinct collectivities corresponding to the variability of the unconscious flux of perception within each monad. If the individual soul is nonetheless capable of extracting distinct perceptions from this insensible flux of perceptions, in the case of humans even self-conscious apperceptions, this is because it is the owner of a "primary matter [*prima materia*]", a kind of "passive power" or "antitypy" (impenetrability) capable of uniting disparate individuals into the organism corresponding to its point of view. For Leibniz the soul is the "active power" or "form" that "dominates" the composite substance, whereas the subordinate monads that participate in it are merely the "requisites without which a thing cannot exist,"³⁸ that is, its subordinate material. The difference between an organic aggregate and an inorganic aggregate is therefore that the former is made *unum per se* by a dominant soul that acts as "foundation [*fundamentum*]" of the body, whereas the latter remains *unum per accidens* and therefore cannot be regarded a substance³⁹. In fact, since secondary matter knows no intrinsic unity, it is not something real in itself. Matter is present only through the organic body

³⁷ *Monadology* § 71, AG, p. 222.

³⁸ G. W. Leibniz, *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe, Sechste Reihe: Philosophische Schriften*, Band II, Berlin 1990, p. 483 (henceforth 'A' followed by series, volume, and page, e.g. A VI. ii, p. 483).

³⁹ *To Des Bosses, 11 March 1706, The Leibniz – Des Bosses Correspondence*, pp. 30-38.

that constitutes the perceptual apparatus of a dominant monad in which the well-founded phenomenon is concretized and otherwise remains fully abstract. At the same time, souls no longer appear as centres of material activity but more like eddies of affectivity. For what is the transindividual composed of if not acephalous animalities, that is, a-mereological multiplicities? The adequate model for the union between body and soul is therefore not that of Husserlian auto-affectation, but that of alimentation and contamination, that is, the machinic processes through which the organic body trades its matter with the matter of its surroundings.

If the harmony between individuals is reproduced at the level of the body, then, this can only be on condition of the strictest possible hierarchy of substances. For Leibniz, reasonable monads can never be dominated since they are exempted from the mechanical laws of the lower level and coincide with the moral laws. But all other souls, especially animal souls, are only dominant to a certain degree. A reasonable monad relates to its body only as the “primitive force [*vis primitive agendi*]” that corresponds to its primary matter. Animal monads, by contrast, are primitive forces only insofar as they are considered individually. Once they are taken *en masse* (something which according to Leibniz cannot happen with reasonable souls), they form clusters that imply a loss of individuality among their components. Secondary matter is therefore traversed by “derivative forces [*vires derivativae*]” that modify primitive forces and constitute the relative unity and activity of different kinds of non-individual modes of being⁴⁰. Plugged into an infinity of material parts that are not part of its primary matter, each body is a power of metamorphosis (*metaschematism* as opposed to *metempsychosis*, which is ruled out by the eternity of the soul⁴¹). Both active and passive, it is a composite of primary and secondary forces, and as such remains open to an impersonal power of life beyond the solitude of the soul. As long as a distinction can be drawn between primitive forces and derivative forces, all forces can be said to reciprocally determine each other, but without the accumulation of derivative forces of the bodies belonging to each of the subordinate substances (the means) ever acting in a way that would be counternatural to primitive force (the end). What Leibniz aims at with his theory of pre-established harmony is the stabilization and moralization of forces, just like he also aims at the neutralization of possession (as would Husserl two centuries later).

But how can I draw the line between my own body and that of others, when my body is a hybrid non-identity composed of infinities of autonomous individual monads, including animal, vegetal and mineral ones, which in turn animate their own bodies different from my organic body of which they are only the “*pro tempore* requisites”?⁴² In *The Fold*, Deleuze makes a distinction between

⁴⁰ *On Nature Itself*, AG, p. 162.

⁴¹ *To Arnauld*, 30 April 1787, AG, p. 88.

⁴² *To Arnauld*, 9 October 1687, G. W. Leibniz, *Die Philosophischen Schriften*, edited by C. J. Gerhardt, Berlin 1879, vol. II, pp. 119-120 (henceforth, ‘GP’).

“non-symmetric and inverted appurtenances” of organization (my monad dominates a body, but each of the monads composing my body possesses its own composite of other monads) and “constant or temporary appurtenances” in flux (my body is of primary or limitation-matter, but it is composed of secondary or flux-matter)⁴³. Given the infinite divisibility of matter, however, such a distinction is never fully determinable. Between the modes of existence and the corresponding material passages, we find a dynamic zone of indiscernibility as to what belongs to me and what doesn't. Hence the images of dizziness, stupefaction and vertigo (*l'étourdissement*) frequently employed by Leibniz – or sleep in Spinoza, when he states that we do not yet know what a body can do – to describe what occurs in perception when derivative forces no longer act in subordination to primary forces. The well-foundedness of the phenomenon is constantly put under pressure: Should I see a psychologist or a physiologist? Am I in control of my car, or am I estranged by modes of production and consumption far beyond my control? Am I a cyborg or a pig?

It is in the immediately practical manner of these questions that abstract matter becomes concrete. While there is a whole casuistry to distinguishing property relations, it is imperative that real union can be proven, as the consequences of their confusion are dreadful: schizophrenia, slavery, self-immolation, war, anthropophagy, incest, necrophilia. Insofar as dominated monads conserve their individuality in respect to their own body, the dominant monad that appropriates them, inversely relates to the bodies that belong to the monads it dominates. The natural order that is in no way individual is inseparable from the moral requirement to possess a body. If to each clear and distinct perception there corresponds some organic movement, this implies that phenomena must somehow be reified in the tentacular relations of a material kinship that is irreducible to the genesis of the perceptions of the soul. The soul is the foundation of the body, but the body is the (abysmal) ground of the soul. Here, in the eternal recurrence of the problem to restore unity in dispersion, the provisional and dialectical character of Leibniz's system reveals itself most fully. As he himself puts it: “After I established these things, I thought I was entering the port; but when I began to meditate about the union of soul and body, I felt as if I were thrown again into the open sea.”⁴⁴

If for Husserl the body is “immediately present” *in* the monadic Ego, this therefore cannot be so for Leibniz, for whom the list of bodily possessions remains indefinite. In Deleuze's words, “it is not easy to know what we own, and for what length of time”, but “[p]henomenology does not suffice.”⁴⁵ It is as if Leibniz tells Husserl that it is not enough to possess an organism to account for the communication of one Ego with another. Intersubjectivity cannot be conceived without a supplementary “interobjectivity.”⁴⁶ Just as Spinoza understands our

⁴³ G. Deleuze, *The Fold*, pp. 108, 110.

⁴⁴ *New System*, AG, p. 142.

⁴⁵ G. Deleuze, *The Fold*, p. 109.

⁴⁶ B. Latour, *On Interobjectivity*, «Mind, Culture, and Activity», 3/4, 1996, pp. 228-245.

body as an effect of its multiple preindividual and transindividual causes, Leibniz discovers a whole domain of pre- and transindividual property relations. Or as Tarde puts it: “At the bottom of all the content of the notion of being, there is the notion of having. But the reciprocal is not true: being does not make up all the content of the idea of property.”⁴⁷ Social life is animated in a complex, sometimes even totemist way: no longer top down, as a global coherence harmonically distributed once and for all over an infinity of autarchic Egos who share a common culture, but in a sequential and circular manner. It is embodied in constantly shifting couplings and ever renewed consistencies, and experienced as a flow of sensations always threatening to disfigure our familiar perceptions. The problem of the constitution of community harks back to a confusion that can only be solved at the level of a microphysics of power, that is, through all the mobile and non-localizable relations of dominance that are lacking in subjectivist accounts. The Leibnizian critique of the transcendentalist account is thus twofold:

1. Immanence is not a solipsistic prison but rather a radical openness. Or as Tarde’s successor at the Collège de France, Henri Bergson, put it in a radically Leibnizian move: “Why insist, in spite of appearances, that I should go from my conscious self to my body, then from my body to other bodies, whereas in fact I place myself at once in the material world in general, and then gradually cut out within it the centre of action which I shall come to call my body and to distinguish from all others?”⁴⁸ Insofar as Husserl is a monadologist, the harmony between body and soul must form the basis of the constitution of community. At stake for Husserl is therefore the grounding of the constitutive lifeworld in body integrity, i.e. the de jure distribution of physical properties based on the identity of the human soul. There is a whole order of psychosocial typologies and forms of law that qualify this requirement due to the demands of social and cultural institutions such as childhood, gender, ethnicity, class and most of all, of course, the market. In Leibniz, similarly, the possession of a body is not only a natural but also a moral requirement insofar as I must express the same world as others. Yet on the other hand this necessity to possess a body derives from a natural order that is not at all individual – the body is not a window but a filter. It is only here that the difference between the private and the public becomes pertinent. It is necessary to distinguish between two states in which a monad can be: a monad is private insofar as it dominates a collective body or passive power that indissociably appertains to it; and it is public or *en masse* insofar as through an inverted appurtenance it belongs to a collective body from which it cannot free itself. In the first case, the monad is regarded from its inside as subject; in

⁴⁷ Tarde, *Monadologie et sociologie*, p. 87. This also leads Tarde to emphasize the medial nature of possession: ‘Being and non-being, the self and the non-self: infertile oppositions that make us forget the true correlatives. The true opposite of the *self* is not the non-self, but the *mine*; the true opposite of being, that is, the having, is not non-being, but the had.’ (*Ibid.*)

⁴⁸ H. Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, tr. by N. M. Paul, W. S. Palmer, New York 2004, pp. 44-45.

the second, it is the requisite of an objective or outside composite that could belong to another subject, but that may also constitute its own, transindividual cause insofar as the permanent flux of secondary matter includes particles that no longer have a clearly defined form or function. As soon as we want to investigate the constitution of real union, we pass from the juridical order of pre-established harmony of souls to the informal yet constitutive element of power and possession, or what comes down to the same: from the monadic condition of closure to the intermonadic condition of “capture”⁴⁹.

2. A second consequence is that, if our bodies can no longer be seen as individual, then neither are they necessarily human. Husserl seeks to overcome the naivety of assuming a plurality of empirical consciousnesses and ends up with a transcendental consciousness constituted on the basis of organic appurtenance. In short: Instead of bracketing natural consciousness (first reduction), he raises it to a transcendental level (second reduction). The Other appears only with the body that does not belong to me. But in this way, the *Leib* remains fettered to human subjectivity. Already in Leibniz, we find the discovery that my body is itself a world composed of thousands of others. Even if my body communicates with another monad’s body, this is not yet a meeting with another Self, but with something more unexpected. No living body could belong to a soul if there wasn’t the swarming of animals: “if Caesar’s soul (for example) were alone in nature, the creator of things need not have given it any bodily organs. But this same creator also wanted to make an infinity of other beings, which are contained in one another’s bodily organs. Our body is a kind of world full of an infinity of creatures which also deserved to exist”⁵⁰. Instead of the presence of another Ego, we discover a whole meshwork teeming with the animal spirits that sustain it. Such is the symbiotic vitalism that saves Leibniz from spiritualism: “the soul is never without an animal or something analogous”⁵¹.

5. The (Neo-)Baroque: Animal and Anomalous Compositions

Let us now return to our analogy between composite substances and the composition of the socius. Although all monads are created by God, Leibniz states that “God governs minds as a prince governs his subjects, or even as a father cares for his children; whereas he disposes of other substances as an engineer handles his machines.”⁵² In the kingdom of nature we find a vitality of the “brute” or “material” souls of minerals, plants and animals that are enveloped in the pleats of matter. Human souls, by contrast, are *de jure* of an order superior to the

⁴⁹ G. Deleuze, *The Fold*, pp. 81, 137.

⁵⁰ *To Lady Masham, June 1704*, GP III, p. 356.

⁵¹ *To Lady Masham, 30 June 1704*, in G. W. Leibniz, *The New System and Associated Contemporary Texts*, translated by R. S. Woolhouse and R. Franks, Oxford 2006, p. 215.

⁵² *New System* § 5, AG, p. 140; *Monadology* § 84, AG, pp. 223-224.

hypothetical laws of physics (God's "subaltern maxims") since only the principles of morality (God's "free decrees") are applicable to them⁵³. This suggests that, whereas until then Christian philosophy combined God as *causa efficiens* and *causa finalis*, Leibniz appears to keep them separate. Human souls do not differ from other souls because they are made of another general type of substance, but because "we might say that everything else is made only for them."⁵⁴ In this way, reasonable monads are the causes *a priori* of changes in lesser substances and thus the physical realm exists to serve the moral, and nature leads to grace.

Following today's agential realism, the awareness of the myriad intra-active entities that permeate traditional species boundaries, this dualism is obviously no longer tenable. But perhaps it never was, least of all for Leibniz. Even though a distinction between the two modes of existence of individuals and composites can always be made, the hierarchy of souls is not as absolute as it seems, since they are all subject to the singular demand that all converge upon the same world. Although there is a radical distinction between right and power, as well as between spiritual automata and corporeal machines, nothing happens on one level without repercussions on the other. The human soul relates to a body full of animal souls in exactly the same manner as the organism relates to inorganic bodies and the animal soul relates to its organs. The terms can always be distinguished, but their inseparability traces a constant coming and going between one level and the other. In the oscillation between the ontological order of reasons and the phenomenal order of composition, sometimes the multiple become one and sometimes the individuals become many. Never is the organization of these masses completely reducible to a single organizing principle. The hierarchy between individual and collectivity is fundamentally reversible, which confronts us with an irreducible yet vertiginous animality: "each part of matter can be thought of as a garden full of plants or as a pond full of fish."⁵⁵

We thus see in what sense the baroque was the encompassing answer to the first great crisis of capitalism, heralding the perennial and deepening crisis of late capitalism that requires ever faster circulation and ever more artifice to realize value and secure its subjects. According to Deleuze, "[i]f the baroque has often been associated with capitalism, it is because the baroque is linked to a crisis of property, a crisis that appears at once with the growth of new machines in the social field and the discovery of new living beings in the organism."⁵⁶ Indeed, the baroque could be seen as the attempt to salvage the Aristotelian worldview no less with early capitalist deterritorialization than with the invention of the microscope. On the one hand, the baroque socius is like an unlimited body or abstract machine, divided over all the local assemblages and machinic functions that effectuate it. Corresponding to theories of immanent constitution, this

⁵³ *Monadology* § 82, *AG*, p. 223.

⁵⁴ *New System* § 5, *AG*, p. 140; *Monadology* § 88-9, *AG*, p. 224.

⁵⁵ *Monadology* § 67, *AG*, p. 222.

⁵⁶ G. Deleuze, *The Fold*, p. 110.

machinic aspect of the social relates not primarily to the production of goods in the service of some instance that transcends it, but to the spontaneous and unmediated intermingling of bodies and fluxes in the production of the social. On the other hand, there appears a new apparatus of capture that extracts useful labor from social production by imposing forms, functions and rigid bonds upon it and by subjugating it to hierarchized organizations and organized transcendencies: definitions of property, legal and illegal appropriations that serve forms of domination, usury and theft, and most important of all, the division between the public and the private.

Both Husserl and Leibniz are inheritors of a Christian dogma according to which being is better than having. Whereas possessions threaten to take over our lives, the powers of control want each of us to confirm to our particular identity and the adherence of bodies to their supposed predicates rather than to our virtual penchants/inclinations. But whether human, animal or mineral, each organ and each institution is only a fold away from infinity, caught up by way of factors of inversion, turnaround, precariousness, and temporalization in an abstract flux of entwined bodies, each of which contains the germ of another possible world. The baroque thus contains a power of variation and continuity that goes beyond the limit of the notions of *Leib* and flesh. With Deleuze and Guattari, this power could be called the body without organs: not a body stripped of organs, but a body upon which organic figures are distributed in the form of multiplicities, such that each relative unity belongs at least peripherally to crowd phenomena⁵⁷. Each organism has to simultaneously push away the body without organs as its absolute limit and feed itself off it in a conduit takes us from the lived body with its limits and horizons towards the plane of consistency that knows neither “differences of level, limit, or distance” nor distinctions between “the artificial and the natural” or “forms and formed substances”⁵⁸.

In its Leibnizian interpretation, the problem of consistency lies in turning the crowd into a people inhabiting the *Respublica Christiana*. But in the open aggregate of the world, does there not precisely emerge something that is too demonic or anomalous for being incorporated in any preestablished order and that leads us towards a new kind of problem? Hobbes already spoke of the “epilepsy” of the state to describe a body politic haunted by ghosts⁵⁹. All crowds exhibit a quality of becoming-animal, insofar as we understand the modality of becoming not as an imitation but as a contamination between porous and leaking bodies. In the words of Deleuze and Guattari: “The act of becoming is a capturing, a possession, a plus-value, but never a reproduction or an imitation.”⁶⁰ Crowds are thus not general statistical orders, but neither can they be understood

⁵⁷ G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, tr. B. Massumi, Minneapolis 1987, pp. 30, 158.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

⁵⁹ T. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. R. Tuck, Cambridge 1996, chapter 29, p. 227.

⁶⁰ G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *Kafka. Toward a Minor Literature*, tr. by D. Polan, Minneapolis 1986, p. 13.

as mere aggregates of individuals. Rather they are veritably interindividual and interactive movements, in which derivative forces emancipate themselves and are no longer containable within alternatives of living and non-living, human and nonhuman, while nevertheless remaining abroad in the world, taking on new forms that are at once plugged into a network of flows and differentiated from others only by a ratio of capture and escape.

From this follows another critique of the ideology of “possessive individualism”⁶¹: an individual man is never another man’s wolf, rather there are always several wolves or packs of wolves. We are subjects folded into amorphous legions whose mode of existence is nomadic rather than substantial. Everywhere such modes can be found, but without forming the unities that transcend their parts. Their relations of reciprocity and interdependence are not internal to a Whole, but the Whole is rather derived from external relations. It is neither the sum of what is the case nor more than the sum of its parts; it is the side-effect existing of the irreducibly social relations of property of a given historical moment and varying alongside them.

In *Multitude*, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri invoke the body without organs when they set up an opposition between on the one hand the political body of Empire as the law incarnate, and on the other hand the multitude as “a new flesh, amorphous flesh that as yet forms no body”⁶². In their analysis, contemporary globalized Empire is the new global political body of capital, a multilevel structure of economic, legal, and political power that controls the common, whereas the multitude is the singular yet common productive power from which Empire derives its own life force. The multitude thus forms simultaneously the exterior limit of capitalism and its real driving force. From the perspective of constituted right, it is a potential monstrosity that goes beyond natural identities such as the family, the community, the people, and the nation and that upsets the traditional divisions between individual and society, subject and object, private and public: “the monster is not an accident but the ever present possibility that can destroy the natural order of authority in all domains, from the family to the kingdom.” But from the perspective of power, the multitude is the subject of a continuous “metamorphosis” and ongoing “constitution”: production of subjectivity and production of the common in the continuous formation of the body of the multitude. In this sense it is not a return to the state of nature, as a legalist might object, “but a result of society, an artificial life”⁶³.

In a similar fashion, Matteo Pasquinelli investigates the “animal spirits” that, as Pasquinelli says, “innervate the production of the commons.”⁶⁴ John Maynard Keynes defined “animal spirits” as precisely those unpredictable human drives

⁶¹ C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism. Hobbes to Locke*, London/Oxford/NY 1962, pp. 3-4.

⁶² M. Hardt, A. Negri, *Multitude*, London/NY 2004, p. 159.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 193-195.

⁶⁴ M. Pasquinelli, *Animal Spirits. A Bestiary of the Commons*, Rotterdam 2009, p. 13.

that influence stock markets and push economic cycles and that are irreducible to the rationalist mantra of supply-and-demand. With each subsequent crisis of capitalism, hence with each crisis of property, they reappear. But even outside of capitalism, or rather as its exterior limit, as Pasquinelli argues, they insist as the autonomous and productive force of the multitude. Hence they make up nothing less than “the biomorphic unconscious of immaterial and cultural production”, the instinctual dimension of the multitude. The multitude turns out to be a conflictive hydra crossed both by self-destructive instincts and forms of collective subjectivity that demand our constant experimentation, attention and care (rather than institutional and legal control).

Both the artificiality and the instability of the multitude are reflected by Leibniz’s account of composite substances. Of course, Leibniz is strictly Aristotelian when he rules out the possibility of any transformation of forms. The body without organs and the apparatus of capture must converge upon a common limit. From the organicist perspective the growth and decay of a body offers an image of the natural transformation of things. Its primary matter or territorial zone always remains the same as its structure stays oriented upon the requirements of the immortal soul that dominates it. But from the perspective of material flow it is precisely the organic body itself which is interchangeable. Each time a union is reproduced, new becomings are also set free. Organization thus takes place at the limit and is constantly put to the test, forced in spite of itself to open onto something that exceeds it, a short revolutionary instant, an experimental surge. Perhaps Leibniz himself had a profound sense of this ongoing de- and reterritorialization of the composite body when he famously declared: “I believe I will always be an amphibian.”⁶⁵

Once we affirm, with Leibniz but also contra Leibniz, the casuistic nature of any distinction between primary and secondary matter, then perhaps it becomes possible to pose the problem of the baroque in modern terms. It would no longer be a question of looking for the foundation of the unity of composite substances at the level of the unchanging soul, but rather of consolidating heterogeneous elements in a becoming. Independently from a mediating soul, the ‘natural’ play of moving and perpetually reshuffled mixtures, captures and interceptions becomes a field of experimentation with animal and anomalous forms of life. In this manner we get a glimpse of how Leibnizian vitalism could contribute to the replacement of the transcendental constitution of the lifeworld with the immanent composition of worlds. This is no longer a mode of composition that proceeds only through dialectical incorporation and mediation, but one that is also (un)grounded by the freedom of singular becomings, that is, through the affirmation of the possibilities immanent to the mobilization of the productive forces of the (neo)baroque. Both nature and the socius are then understood from a perspective somewhere midstream between embryology and teratology. Animals are not poor in world but open up worlds. They are possible worlds

⁶⁵ *A I*, 1, p. 445.

that cohere neither inside nor outside of a preestablished socius, but on the borderline of its myriad compossibilities.

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