

Charles Wolfe , Toulouse / ERRAPHIS, Soul as mind, soul as organism: two naturalization strategies in the Enlightenment

I present two cases of Enlightenment 'naturalization of the soul'. First, a psychological naturalization, where the soul as locus of mental functions is reconfigured in increasingly 'naturalistic' terms (mechanistic, Newtonian, associationist, materialist...) (Vidal 2011, Wolfe 2016). In a 1761 letter to Charles Bonnet, Hieronymus Gaub makes an intriguing remark: criticizing materialist accounts of mind-body relations such as La Mettrie's, Gaub suggests that a thorough study of the "mechanics of the soul" is needed, and Bonnet should write it. The mechanics of the soul, even though it is presented as non-materialist, sounds like a 'naturalization of the soul' (although not of the metaphysical sort discussed in Martin and Barresi 2000). Indeed, in his psychological writings, Bonnet declares that by 'soul' he just means 'mind'. A second, more biological naturalization takes the soul as a 'principle of organic unity' and gradually reconfigures it as 'organism'. Here, Stahlian animism is appropriated and transformed by Montpellier vitalists (Bordeu, Ménéuret), who strip 'soul' of its metaphysical commitments (Wolfe-Terada 2008, Wolfe 2019) and conflate 'soul functions' with vital functions and organismic unity (Wilson 1997). An unresolved question for both the 'psychological' and the 'biological' naturalizations is the extent to which they flow into 'positive science'.

François Duchesneau, Université de Montréal, Blumenbach's formative drive: A teleological principle beyond mechanist models

In his essay *Ueber den Bildungstrieb und das Zeugungsgeschäfte*, first published in 1781, J. F. Blumenbach proposed a new hypothesis about the generation and development of living beings, which Kant endorsed to a given point in his *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790). On the one hand, Blumenbach postulated that a propensity toward vital organization is present in all living organic bodies; on the other hand, that this "formative drive" (*nisus formativus*) is only to be identified with the presumed sufficient reason for specific effects that experience reveals. I intend: (1) to analyze the way in which Blumenbach argued for the objective value of his concept, and for the function it could play in a non-mechanistic theory of living beings; (2) to assess how it differed from other significant appeals to, and use of, so-called "biological analogues" of the force of attraction to account for living phenomena. For this comparison, I shall refer to the theory of the "essential force" (*vis essentialis*), initially proposed by C. F. Wolff in his *Theoria generationis* (1759).

Alison Simmons, Harvard, "Beyond Dualism: The Case of Anne Conway"

Conway is no friend of mind-body dualism. (She is also no friend of mechanical materialism.) My paper reconstructs Conway's argument against dualism (and mechanism), and her defense of her own form of vitalist monism, by exploring the ways in which she engages with two of dualism's proclaimed motivations: (a) explaining the order found in nature and (b) accounting for human exceptionalism. As we'll see, her argument is driven in large part by her robustly teleological view of nature. Note: this paper is drawn from a paper co-written with Marleen Rozemond on Cavendish and Conway's rejections of dualism.

Stephan Schmid, Universität Hamburg, The Fundamentality of Final Causes in Leibniz

While commentators widely agree that final causation involved in activities of substances is more fundamental than efficient causation amongst bodies (since the latter is ultimately explained in terms of the former), some hold that the final causation involved in the activities of fundamental substances or monads is in fact a form of intentional efficient causation. As I will argue, this view is not only at odds with how Leibniz actually conceives of the activities of monads, but also prevents us from fully appreciating a central feature of Leibniz's philosophy: his *teleological rationalism*, according to which final causes can (and often do) figure as sufficient reasons.

Enrico Piergiacomi, Villa I Tatti, Finalism as the Glory of God: The Debate between Gassendi and Descartes on Final Causes

This paper reconstructs the debate between René Descartes and Pierre Gassendi about the final causes created by God. It will be argued that they differed as regards the metaphysical, methodological, ethical interpretation of finalism. Descartes claimed that final causes exist, but that they are useless for understanding nature and that it is impious for humans to try to investigate divine finalism. By contrast, Gassendi defended the opposite arguments, by contending that final causes are grasped by human beings with certainty, that they offer a clear understanding of nature, and that the quest for finalism is an expression of religious piety.

Ido Geiger, Ben-Gurion University, Kant on the Aesthetic Purposiveness of Nature

Kant states over and over again that pure aesthetic judgments are neither grounded in concepts nor furnish us with concepts. This seems very clearly to suggest that they can have no role to play in an account of our empirical experience and knowledge of nature, precisely because experience and knowledge for Kant are conceptual. Against this line of thinking I claim that the pure aesthetic pleasure evoked by a spatial form underwrites the nonconceptual delineation of a natural object from the manifold of intuition; and these natural forms allow for a first non-conceptual sorting of natural objects, which underwrites our conceptual grasp of natural kinds. Kant's analysis of pure aesthetic judgments is thus an essential element in his account of the transcendental conditions of empirical experience and knowledge.

Marleen Rozemond, University of Toronto, "The Need for immaterial Beings in Cudworth and Leibniz"

Cudworth and Leibniz had very substantial philosophical differences: thus Cudworth was an interactionist dualist while Leibniz ultimately saw his monads only as fundamental and denied interaction. But reading Cudworth and Leibniz reveals some interesting similarities. Both argued that the created world must contain immaterial beings on broadly two grounds: thinking cannot belong to matter and, for various reasons, the world needs active entities. This paper aims to offer a philosophical examination of these arguments and considers the question of Cudworth influencing Leibniz, who read Cudworth's magnum opus *The True Intellectual System* at least twice.

Nabeel Hamid, Concordia University (Montréal), "Teleology and Mechanism in Wolff's Cosmology"

It is well-known that Wolff's science of Teleology deals primarily with external relations of benefit among creatures, not with their internal, purposive activity. In this talk, I focus instead on the place in Wolff's cosmology of the latter sense of teleology, i.e. of substances as bearers of, or simply as, goal-directed principles of change. I argue that Wolff does embrace the idea of the nature of substance as innate force, but that Wolffian forces are essentially aimless. For Wolff, natural ends consist in mutually adjusted, static powers (*potentiae*) of substances, not in active forces (*vires*). The teleological character of Wolffian cosmology rests on a very un-Leibnizian distinction between power and force

Julia Jorati, University of Massachusetts Amherst, "Teleology and the Mind-Body Union in Early Modern Theories of Slavery"

Teleology plays several important roles in early modern theories of slavery; this talk analyzes these roles. Some early modern authors follow Aristotle in claiming that certain human beings are intended by nature, or God, for slavery. Being a slave is the telos of these individuals, who are therefore "natural slaves." This teleology is typically grounded either in divine intentions or in the natural characteristics of these individuals. Several authors also describe the relationship between masters and slaves teleologically and as analogous to the mind-body relation. The slave acts as a mere instrument for the master's ends, and slaves are subordinated to masters just like our bodies are subordinated to our minds.

Anat Schechtman, University of Wisconsin-Madison, "Leibniz (and Adams) on Perfection as Infinity"

This paper distinguishes between quantitative and non-quantitative approaches to infinity in early modern philosophy, highlighting a non-quantitative approach that links infinity to perfection. On this approach, found in some of Leibniz's writing and made explicit by Robert Adams, perfections are analogous to sensible qualities such as color: the maximal (= infinite) degree of a divine perfection is analogous to the maximal degree of a sensible quality. Although this approach is historically well-founded and philosophically potent, I argue that it does not sit easily within the mechanistic framework of the seventeenth century.

Reed Winegar, Fordham University, "Nature and Grace in Leibniz and Kant"

Kant repeatedly relates his theory of the highest good to Leibniz's pre-established harmony between the kingdoms of nature and grace. But why does Kant single out Leibniz in this context? And how does Kant's seeming approval of Leibniz's pre-established harmony between the kingdoms of nature and grace square with Kant's own criticisms of pre-established harmony? This paper argues that Kant focuses on Leibniz's pre-established harmony between the kingdoms of nature and grace because he is interested in it specifically as an account of a harmony between moral and natural laws, such that the realization of moral ends in the natural world does not require any violations of the laws of nature. As an account of the agreement between laws, rather than things, this harmony is immune to Kant's other criticisms of pre-established harmony. Finally, focusing on this aspect of Kant's interest in Leibniz shows that we should reject interpretations of the highest good that place it beyond nature as well as various "post-critical" interpretations of Kant's third Critique, the work in which Kant deals most fully with the relationship between the moral law and the laws of nature.

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Unsurprisingly, Kant's discussed pre-established harmony throughout his career. Yet his attitude towards this central Leibnizian doctrine is more nuanced than could be imagined. In this paper I argue that there is a unifying principle to Kant's view: It is not an explanatory principle of individuals but rather a unifying principle of wholes. I first address Kant's pre-critical engagement with pre-established harmony. While he rejected it as an account of causality, he made extensive references to harmony between the laws of nature. I then argue that this type of harmony is transformed from a constitutive to a regulative principle. This allows Kant to appreciate one of Leibniz's motivations in pre-established harmony, the compatibility of mechanistic and teleological causal laws. To conclude, I show how Kant could view the teleological principles of the critique of judgment as the 'true apology' for Leibniz's pre-established harmony.