

A Companion to Kant

Edited by

Graham Bird

BLACKWELL PUBLISHING
350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5020, USA
9600 Garsington Road, Oxford OX4 2DQ, UK
550 Swanston Street, Carlton, Victoria 3053, Australia

The right of Graham Bird to be identified as the Author of the Editorial Material in this Work has been asserted in accordance with the UK Copyright, Designs, and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, except as permitted by the UK Copyright, Designs, and Patents Act 1988, without the prior permission of the publisher.

First published 2006 by Blackwell Publishing Ltd

1 2006

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A companion to Kant / edited by Graham Bird.

p. cm. — (Blackwell companions to philosophy : 36)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-1-4051-1197-3 (hardback : alk. paper)

ISBN-10: 1-4051-1197-6 (hardback : alk. paper) 1. Kant, Immanuel, 1724-1804. I. Bird, Graham, 1930- II. Series.

B2798.C75 2006

193—dc22

2006006916

A catalogue record for this title is available from the British Library.

Set in 10/12.5pt Photina
by Graphcraft Limited, Hong Kong
Printed and bound in Singapore
by Markono Print Media Pte Ltd

The publisher's policy is to use permanent paper from mills that operate a sustainable forestry policy, and which has been manufactured from pulp processed using acid-free and elementary chlorine-free practices. Furthermore, the publisher ensures that the text paper and cover board used have met acceptable environmental accreditation standards.

For further information on
Blackwell Publishing, visit our website:
www.blackwellpublishing.com

Contents

Notes on Contributors	viii
Acknowledgments	xii
References to Kant's Works	xiii
General Introduction	1
<i>Graham Bird</i>	
1 Kant's Life and Works	10
<i>Allen W. Wood</i>	
Part I: Pre-Critical Issues	31
2 Kant's Early Dynamics	33
<i>Martin Schönfeld</i>	
3 Kant's Early Cosmology	47
<i>Martin Schönfeld</i>	
4 Kant's Laboratory of Ideas in the 1770s	63
<i>Alison Laywine</i>	
5 Kant's Debt to Leibniz	79
<i>Predrag Cicovacki</i>	
6 Kant's Debt to the British Empiricists	93
<i>Wayne Waxman</i>	
Part II: Critique of Pure Reason	109
7 Kant's Transcendental Idealism	111
<i>Henry E. Allison</i>	
8 Kant's Analytic Apparatus	125
<i>Graham Bird</i>	
9 Kant's Transcendental Aesthetic	140
<i>Lorne Falkenstein</i>	
	v

- Laywine, Alison (1993). *Kant's Early Metaphysics and the Origins of the Critical Philosophy*. Atascadero: Ridgeview Publishing Co.
- Laywine, Alison (2001). Kant in reply to Lambert on the ancestry of metaphysical concepts. *Kantian Review*, 5: 1–48.
- Laywine, Alison (2003). Kant on sensibility and the understanding in the 1770s. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 33(4): 443–82.
- Laywine, Alison (2005). Kant on the self as model of experience. *Kantian Review*, 9(1): 1–29.

Kant's Debt to Leibniz

PREDRAG CICOVACKI

I

It has become so customary to interpret Kant as working mostly on the problems that Hume presented to modern philosophy that his great indebtedness to Leibniz is easily overlooked. Kant's words from the *Prolegomena* about how Hume woke him up from his dogmatic slumber are quoted often (4:260; Kant 2002: 57), yet it is usually forgotten that Kant also maintained that "the *Critique of pure reason* might well be the true apology for Leibniz, even against those of his disciples who heap praises upon him that do him no honor" (20:250; translations from Kant 2002: 336).

This quotation comes from Kant's late work, *On a Discovery whereby any new Critique of pure reason is to be made superfluous by an older one* (1790), in which he defended himself against the charges brought by Johann August Eberhard (1739–1809). In the years of 1788–9, in the pages of *Philosophisches Magazin*, this Wolffian philosopher persistently argued that Leibniz's writings already contained everything that is true and noteworthy in Kant's Critical philosophy, and much else in addition (see Vleeschauwer 1962: 140–51; Allison 1973: 15–45). The gist of Kant's reply was to acknowledge his debt to Leibniz, but also to argue that the nature and scope of his indebtedness was misconstrued by Eberhard and like-minded Wolffians. They did not understand either the true spirit of Kant's philosophy, or that of Leibniz. It was not the Wolffians but he – Kant – who was the genuine philosophical heir of Leibniz.

Just as Kant's expressed sympathies for Hume must not deceive us into believing that he rejected Leibniz's philosophy altogether, his debate with Eberhard should not mislead us to believe that he accepted all the theories of Leibniz. Whether it was Leibniz, Hume, or any other of his great predecessors, Kant's attitude was never that of complete rejection or full acceptance, but always complex and nuanced. To mention a few examples, Kant was unequivocally critical of Leibniz's alleged proofs of God's existence, of his principle of indiscernibles, of his conception of space, of his lack of any sharp distinction between sensibility and understanding, and of his virtually unlimited optimism with regard to the power of reason. Nevertheless, in the debate between Locke and Leibniz on innate ideas, he was far closer to his countryman. Kant was also very supportive of Leibniz's dynamic conception of matter, of his insistence on the principle of sufficient reason and its separation from the principle of contradiction, and of Leibniz's unwavering commitment to the supersensible.

The term "monad," which suited Leibniz's purposes extremely well, comes from the Greek word "monas," which can be translated as "one," "unit," or "unity." All of these translations were important to Leibniz in order to capture both the ideas of distinct individuality and of ultimate unity in his concept of substance. Thereby he hoped to correct the mistakes of his predecessors, but also to preserve their correct insights (see Dewey 1969: 291; Rutherford 1995: 129, 137). In opposition to Descartes and Locke, who both overstressed the individuality of substance, Leibniz wanted to uphold the principle of unity. By contrast, against Spinoza, who overemphasized unity, Leibniz wanted to safeguard the principles of individuality, diversity, and multiplicity. Thus the most basic message behind the word "monad" is the dual nature of simple substance: that of individuality without duplication, yet reflecting the order of the whole, or universal harmony (see Leibniz 1991: 15, 265; Beck 1969: 223).

Leibniz was involved in a debate concerning the nature of substance with the Cartesians far more than with Locke or Spinoza, and for the purpose of clarifying his views further it may be beneficial to compare his conception of monads with Descartes' conception of substance. Descartes understood the term "substance" in a traditional Aristotelian and scholastic sense, as that which sub-sists or stands-under. What characterized Descartes' own conception was a sharp separation of three kinds of substance: *res extensa*, or the extended substance of material bodies, *res cogitans*, or thinking substance, and God as a unique kind of substance. Leibniz had a threefold categorization of substances of his own, yet the difference between them was that of degree, not of kind. On the lower level there are "bare monads," which have unconscious perception and lack memory and awareness. Then there are souls, or monads that have consciousness. On the highest level are spirits, which are conscious souls also capable of self-consciousness and reasoning (see Rescher 1991: 92).

To make the contrast between these philosophers clearer, let us consider some objections that Leibniz had against each of Descartes' three kinds of substance. It is easy to notice, for example, that in Leibniz's writings we do not find any extended discussion of Descartes' celebrated evil demon argument. The reason for this is that, unlike Descartes, Leibniz put priority on God's intellect rather than his will. The God of Leibniz is perfect intellect and his will is merely "a certain consequence of his intellect." God is envisioned as the "region of ideas," the inner necessity of whose perfection requires him to bring the best of all conceived possibilities into existence.

Even more instructive is Leibniz's disagreement with Descartes' conception of *res cogitans*. Although Descartes' thinking substance had served as an inspiration for Leibniz's notion of a monad, there are several discrepancies between the two (see Furth 1967: 170–3). (i) All events occurring in *res cogitans* must be conscious, while events occurring in monads need not. Leibniz accounted for the difference by distinguishing between perception and apperception, and also by famously postulating the possibility of unconscious perceptions, "petites perceptions." (ii) Thinking substances can differ from each other in nothing more than number, while numerical differences are not sufficient to distinguish two monads; monads are not individuated merely by their position in space and time, but by an internal principle. (iii) *Res cogitans* are capable of presenting only fragments of reality, while monads represent the entire universe, each monad from its own unique perspective. (iv) *Res cogitans* are for Descartes only the fractions of the entire universe, which also involves an incalculable

How then shall we interpret Kant's debt to Leibniz? If a downright denunciation and an uncritical acceptance are both rejected as too extreme and historically inaccurate, what exactly was Kant's relation to Leibniz? Kant himself made it difficult to find the right answers to these questions. In the concluding pages of *On a Discovery*, for example, Kant specified three points in which he regarded himself to be the true follower of Leibniz. He first set apart the principle of sufficient reason, which – Kant claimed – both Leibniz and he understood as a subjective, not an objective principle. Kant then brought up monads and their relation to material bodies, which even for Leibniz was not a relation of composition, but of condition. Leibniz was right in regarding the simple not as an element in the sensible, but as something supersensible, the ground of the sensible. Thirdly, Kant professed to follow Leibniz with regard to the principle of the preestablished harmony: not a harmony between independent substances, but a harmony between modes of knowing, between the senses and the understanding.

Kant appeared to have twisted Leibniz's terminology and views to suit his own purposes (see Allison 1973: 102; Vleeschauwer 1962: 151). Did not Leibniz, for instance, think that the principle of sufficient reason was an objective principle, a principle that reflects the very structure of being? Before we draw any definitive conclusion, we must remember that Kant was never interested in a historically accurate presentation of Leibniz, or of any other philosopher. The spirit of his approach was captured in his often quoted claim on Plato:

it is not at all unusual to find that we understand him even better than he understood himself, since he may not have determined his concepts sufficiently and hence sometimes spoke, or even thought, contrary to his own intention. (B 370; Kant 1998: 396)

Kant's philosophical interest was clearly focused on leading the doctrines of previous philosophers to their ultimate conclusions, even when their authors were not fully aware of all the consequences of their thoughts themselves. To see what this means in our case, let us take a closer look at the three doctrines of Leibniz that Kant himself singled out. We will invert Kant's order of presentation, however, and begin with monadology, since it is the foundation of Leibniz's entire philosophical edifice.

II

The most inspiring but also most puzzling aspect of Leibniz's philosophical thought is his conception of substances as monads. Unfortunately, he never managed to offer its fully developed and systematic presentation. Leibniz had the main contours of this novel conception of substance in his early thirties, yet for a long time he could not find an appropriate terminology, and perhaps also the most adequate formulation, for his views. Although today it is universally associated with Leibniz, the term "monad" was actually used first by the English philosopher Henry More (1614–87). Leibniz probably learned of the term indirectly, through some of More's students, and started using it in his writings after 1695, when he was almost 50 years old. What we now take to be the most precise summary of Leibniz's system, his *Monadology*, was written when Leibniz was almost 70 years old.

multiplicity of extended bodies, while for Leibniz reality ultimately consists of monads, each of which is a simple immaterial and non-extended substance, a mere metaphysical point endowed with energy and a degree of consciousness.

Leibniz attacked the concept of extension and Descartes' conception of *res extensa* as well: the essence of body consists not in extension but in motion (see Loemker 1969: 338–48). To speak of something extended is to speak of an aggregate, which means a lack of unity. It also means a sheer plurality, continuity, and co-existence of parts. No substance can properly be called extended, since that predicate can be ascribed only to a class, and no substance is a class. An army of soldiers, or a heap of leaves, for example, is a class and an aggregate, but not a true unity and not a substance. The universe is not a mere aggregate of an infinite multiplicity of extended bodies independent from each other.

Leibniz wanted to preserve the unitary and universal aspects of monads – their interrelatedness to the whole universe. He compared monads to souls and claimed that every substance is either a soul or soul-like. In its relation to other monads and the universe as a whole, every monad is "pregnant with the future" and must be viewed in teleological terms: it must have what Aristotle and the Scholastics called a "form" toward which it strives. Thus, every individual substance not only receives the impressions from without but also determines itself from within, in accordance with its own internal entelechy. God alone is the ultimate unity or the original simple substance, of which all created or derived monads are the products. God alone is also the perfect entelechy, while created monads are what could be called *perfectibles*: "they are imitations approaching him in proportion to their perfection" (Leibniz 1991: 261).

III

What to make of this fascinating, yet barely comprehensible, theory of monads? Criticisms were coming from all sides, and even Wolff, the self-appointed official interpreter of Leibniz's philosophy, was uncomfortable with that aspect of the master's teaching. He interpreted monads against the spirit of Leibniz as spatial and temporal. Like many other contemporaries, Wolff ended up preferring the Cartesian mind-body dualism to the Leibnizian account of a living, spirited world, in which the role and function of matter was never made convincingly clear. Coming from another camp, scientists and philosophers of that time (Newton and Clarke included) criticized Leibniz for a revival of the Aristotelian and medieval concept of substance, which conflicted with the basic principles of the modern, mathematically and physically oriented mode of knowledge (see Cassirer 1981: 27).

Leibniz did not hide his affinity for Aristotle and the Scholastics, and some of his early definitions of substance are taken almost verbatim from Aristotle's *Categories* and *Metaphysics* (see Mates 1986: 190–5; Rutherford 1995: 125–6). To see how Leibniz defended himself, let us recall Aristotle's doctrine of four causes, all of which need to be known to gain a complete comprehension of our object of inquiry. (i) The formal cause roughly corresponds to the question: What a thing is? (ii) The final cause deals with the question: For what it is? (iii) The material cause addresses the question: From what it is made? (iv) The efficient cause discusses the question: How it came about?

Most modern scientists concentrated on material and efficient causality, and denied the relevance of formal and final causes for science. Leibniz, by contrast, thought that their material atoms have no internal and essential relation to other atoms and the world as a whole. Every variety and change in them is merely external: each atom is completely foreign to every other atom and they do not enter into the structure of a harmonious universe (see Dewey 1969: 294–5). Atoms are uniform and their behavior can be partially explained in terms of mechanical laws, but Leibniz held that they are neither individuated enough nor would they allow for a genuine unity of the world. For that we need formal and teleological causality, and both could be understood in a roughly Aristotelian way. Each substance has a form toward which it strives, and this form is its inner principle, its soul. This connection between form and soul is, again, Aristotelian: soul is the form of the body. The universe is full of life; it is full of interconnected, living, and spirited organisms, which is a very different viewpoint from the mechanicism prevailing from the seventeenth century on, including our own time.

What did Kant have to say about monads and monadology? At the first glance, hardly anything, which may be very surprising considering the intellectual milieu in which he developed as a thinker. For this reason, Kant's most comprehensive comment on monadology deserves to be quoted at some length:

[Monadology] has nothing at all to do with the explanation of natural appearances, but is rather an intrinsically correct *Platonic* concept of the world devised by Leibniz, insofar as it is considered, not at all as the object of the senses, but as a thing in itself, and is merely an object of the understanding, which, however, does indeed underlie the appearance of the senses. Now the *composite of things in themselves* must certainly consist of the simple, for the parts must here be given prior to all composition. But the *composite in the appearance* does not consist of the simple, because in the appearance, which can never be given otherwise than as composed (extended), the parts can only be given through division, and thus not prior to the composite, but only in it. Therefore, Leibniz's idea, so far as I comprehend it, was not to explicate space through the order of simple beings next to one another, but was rather to set this order alongside space as corresponding to it, but as belonging to a merely intelligible world (unknown to us). Thus he asserts nothing but what has been shown elsewhere: namely, that space, together with the matter of which it is the form, does not contain the world of things in themselves, but only their appearance, and is itself only the form of our outer sensible intuition. (MFNS 4.507–8; Kant 2002: 219)

This quote is from *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, published five years after the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and we recognize a number of themes from that work compressed here in a single paragraph. The separation of appearances and things in themselves is important throughout the first *Critique*. The distinction between "the composite of things in themselves" and "the composite in appearance" echoes the discussion of the second (and partially also the first) antinomy (see CPR B 459, B 467–70). The idea that space is the form of outer intuition and does not contain the world of things in themselves is presented in the numerous sections of the *Critique*: Transcendental Aesthetic, Phenomena and Noumena, On the Amphiboly of Concepts of Reflection, and throughout Transcendental Dialectic.

The striking thing about the quoted passage is that Kant seems to be in fundamental agreement with Leibniz, although in the *Critique* he criticized him in all of the mentioned

transformation. He mostly abandoned Leibniz's terminology, but not all of his central views. On the one hand, the monad is not an individual substance for Kant, but rather the unanalyzable unity of which we are aware as the ultimate ground and condition of all other perceived reality. Insofar as monads are immaterial substances and objects of the understanding, Kant called them things in themselves and noumena. Since they are not spatially and temporally given, they cannot be individuated, and thus not known. On the other hand, Kant took seriously Leibniz's idea that a monad is a form, a unity of a kind. He did not consider the monad to be a substantial form, yet the idea of a spontaneous, formative activity of the self-conscious and rational monad became one of Kant's central preoccupations in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

IV

The old scholastic ontology was based on the conviction that timeless, immaterial, and nonsensible universals and essences are the defining principles of perceivable things. If we could grasp these universals, these substantial forms of things, we would be able to understand the principles of their development and reasons for the changes they undergo. The methodological tool for their comprehension is the definition. This is the foundation for the deductive character of the old ontology: once human reason finds itself in the possession of the highest universals, it can then "derive" from them all that which it does not know how to extract from experience.

There is much that Leibniz inherited from this conception of ontology. Not only that he used the scholastic language of substantial forms and essences, but at various times tried to identify those highest universals and, starting with them, reconstruct the entire structure of being. He often mentioned the principles of contradiction, of sufficient reason, of indiscernibles, of plenitude, and of continuity as the highest principles that determine the structure and behavior of everything existing. The first two of these principles were by far the most important to him, yet there is a controversy concerning their exact relationship. In the famous essay on "First Truths," Leibniz tried to deduce a complete hierarchy of the rational principles, starting with the principle of contradiction. His most famous interpreter, Wolff, took this line of reasoning to be the master's official and definitive view. Other writings reveal, however, that Leibniz wavered in his conviction; he often held that the principle of sufficient reason cannot be derived from the principle of contradiction, and moreover, that the principle of sufficient reason may be the more important of the two.

The principle of sufficient reason plays diverse roles in Leibniz's *Weltanschauung*. Let us briefly point out five of them, although he himself did not always make any clear distinction between them. (i) While the principle of contradiction regulates our reasoning regarding necessary truths ("truths of reason"), the principle of sufficient reason seems to govern not only contingent truths ("truths of facts"), but necessary truths as well. All truths whatsoever must have a sufficient reason for being what they are, which in the case of necessary truths reduces to identity and non-contradiction (see Rescher 1991: 118–19). (ii) This principle provides a foundation for Leibniz's belief in the relevance of final causality: to say that everything has a reason is to say

underscored by Kant – which occurs in the first sentence, where he calls monadology "an intrinsically correct Platonic concept of the world." Everyone else was criticizing Leibniz's monadology for being Aristotelian (and scholastic) while Kant disagreed and considered it Platonic. Even if Kant's claim that things in themselves underlie appearances retains some echoes of the Aristotelian conception of substance, the overall tone of the quote makes it clear that he considered monadology correct only insofar as it was Platonic. There are several reasons for that. One is the Platonic two-world theory, about which there was, at least in broad contours, an essential agreement between Leibniz and Kant. Another reason can be seen if we recall Aristotle's four causes. Here, again, Kant may have had more sympathy for Leibniz's stance than for Newton's. He accepted efficient causality as indispensable for natural science and ordinary experience, but had a dynamic conception of matter that put emphasis on force rather than on particles of impenetrable mass. Furthermore, like Leibniz and unlike Newton, Kant was not ill-disposed toward formal and teleological causality.

Recall again Leibniz's idea of individuality without duplication, yet reflecting the order of the whole, or universal harmony. What is Aristotelian in this idea is the emphasis on the individuality of the monad: primary substance for Aristotle is individual substance. The Platonic aspect of Leibniz's conception deals with his emphasis on the unity and the order pervading the whole universe. A Platonic idea is a paradigmatic expression of that unity, yet void of any Aristotelian individuality. Individuality belongs only to concrete things, but not to an idea or a universal.

The central idea of Leibniz's monadology is to show that the monad captures both of these moments, individuality and universality. Kant's central criticism is that it cannot be done, at least not at the same epistemological and metaphysical level, without a Platonic two-world conception. If we separate the individual and the universal and give priority to the latter, then we have a truly Platonic reading of monadology, and Kant called this interpretation "an intrinsically correct Platonic concept of the world devised by Leibniz." In the next section we shall discuss why the universal should be primary, if not metaphysically then epistemologically. Let us consider here why it could not be the individual. The point that tied Kant's numerous criticisms of Leibniz throughout the *Critique* was that we do not have a way of individuating a monad or, in Kant's terminology, a thing in itself. He agreed with Leibniz that a noumenal entity, an object of the understanding, could not be individuated in terms of its matter. But Kant persistently denied – from his earliest writings, such as *Nova Dilucidatio*, to his latest, such as "What Real Progress has Metaphysics made in Germany since the time of Leibniz and Wolff?" – that an object of the understanding could be identified based on inner qualities: "we know of no internal real determinations which could be attributed to a simple, except for representations, and what depends on them" (20.284; Kant 2002: 375). Such representations, however, could only be attributed to bodies, and they are not only inner or conceptual, but also spatial and temporal. This was the ground of Kant's famous objection to the principle of indiscernibles, namely how Leibniz intellectualized phenomena: while Locke mistakenly assumed that there is no more in an object than what is presented in an intuition of that object, Leibniz took for granted that there is no more in an object than what is contained in the concept of the object (see B 326–7; Paton 1969: 75).

that a final cause exists for everything in this world as it was created. (iii) The principle of sufficient reason relates the world of the sensible and conditioned to something nonsensible and unconditional: "the sufficient or final reason must lie outside of the sequence or series of this detail of contingencies, however infinite it may be" (Rescher 1991: 21–2). (iv) Leibniz also thought that, "were it not for this great principle we could never prove the existence of God" (Leibniz 1996: 179). (v) Finally, the principle of sufficient reason assures the rationality of the real. Events in the world are neither random nor arbitrary; as it is given to us, the world is rationally ordered (see Rescher 1991: 119).

Kant's quest for a new metaphysics was revolutionary insofar as he criticized the deductive procedure of the scholastic ontology, which Leibniz tried to modify for his purposes. Kant abandoned substantial forms and obliterated the whole doctrine of essences. Whether or not Leibniz intended to deduce all other principles from the principle of contradiction, Kant concluded that this program could not be carried out. If metaphysics is to be grounded on the secure foundations, a new kind of logic and a new kind of deduction had to be invented.

Although not often mentioned by its name in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, it would be hardly possible to overestimate the role that the principle of sufficient reason plays in Kant's new transcendental logic. That is why in acknowledging his debt to Leibniz in *On a Discovery* he mentioned this principle first. Even if not from Leibniz's point of view, Kant thought that the principle of sufficient reason was more important than monadology; it provided that backbone around which all the pieces of Kant's new metaphysics are gathered and in relation to which they obtained their meaning and validity.

This is not to say that in Kant's philosophy this principle is not modified, or that it served the same functions as it did in Leibniz. If we glance again at the list of five uses of this principle in Leibniz, it is not difficult to see that Kant did not tie it so closely to teleology, nor did he consider this principle as sufficient to prove the existence of God. Kant's most consequential novelty with regard to this principle was emphasized by Schopenhauer: neither the ancient nor modern philosophers, such as Descartes, Spinoza, or Leibniz, "reached a clear distinction between requiring a reason for knowledge in support of a judgment and requiring a cause for the occurrence of an actual event" (Schopenhauer 1974: 13). Under the influence of Hume, Kant came to realize that the general ground or reason for the occurrence of an event should not be confused with the epistemological ground or reason for believing something to be the case. "Cause" should not be confused with "because." This is presumably why in *On a Discovery* Kant claimed that Leibniz must have meant it as a subjective, not as an objective principle (8.247–8; Kant 2002). Kant should have added the following clarification: had Leibniz grasped clearly the distinction between "cause" and "because," he would have considered the principle of sufficient reason to be subjective.

In both *Critique of Pure Reason* and *On a Discovery*, Kant tied Leibniz's two most important principles to the distinction of analytic and synthetic judgments (see chapter 8 below). The principle of contradiction becomes the ground and the criterion of analytic judgments, while the principle of sufficient reason is the principle of synthetic judgments. Various forms of synthesis analyzed in the *Critique* are the various forms of sufficient reason. In Kant's own admission, this connection between the principle of sufficient reason and synthetic judgments "was certainly a new and noteworthy pointer

to investigations that were yet to be instituted in metaphysics" (20.248; Kant 2002: 334). The task, however, was not carried out by Leibniz, but by Kant. While in Leibniz's philosophy the mind has to mirror the synthesis already created and given through the real essences and substantial forms, Kant's revolutionary turn consisted in ascribing the production of this synthetic unity to the spontaneous activity of the cognizing mind. The mind does not mirror the already existing order of the universe, but produces it in a synthetic combination of intuition and concept. The results of that synthetic activity are synthetic judgments.

Leibniz was seduced into various kinds of speculative deductions because he tended to blur the distinction between a concept of the thing and the thing itself, and also because he took for granted that the principle of sufficient reason is always a principle of determinative judgment (see Leibniz 1952: 44; Leibniz 1996: 179). As a result, he appropriated, as it were, God's point of view, while all that is available is our human perspective, our own discursive reason which depends on intuitions for direct contact with reality. We have no legitimate right to assume as the determinative principle of our cognition that nothing ever happens without the idea that an omniscient mind could give some reason why it should have happened rather than not. Such a position turns our allegedly rigid deductions into arbitrary speculations and constructions, as the antinomies and other dialectical illusions testify.

Kant did not blame the faculty of reason itself for these transcendental illusions. Very much in the spirit of Leibniz's understanding of the principle of sufficient reason, Kant formulated what he called the "principle of pure reason": If the conditioned is given, then the entire sum of conditions and hence the absolutely unconditional is also given (B 364; Kant 1998: 392). What we experience is conditioned, and the possibility of our empirical cognition was explained by Kant in terms of cognitive synthesis. The proper task of metaphysics was – just as Leibniz held – to search for the unconditional. Leibniz offered his monadology as a solution, but Kant found it unacceptable when he paired its claims to those advanced by skeptics and empiricists. The antinomial impasse between the dogmatic and rationalistic theses versus the skeptical and empiricist antitheses shows that both sides committed some common mistakes. The crucial one was a lack of the resolute distinction between appearances and things as they are in themselves, which then led both sides to further and more consequential mistakes. Since the chains of conditioned appearances are given, both sides uncritically assumed that the unconditional itself must also be given, but then disagreed with respect to what it is.

Kant's revolutionary insight was that, for human beings, the unconditional is cognitively inaccessible either through direct intuition, or through deductive reasoning, or through any symbolic or analogous representation. Since Kant was unwilling even to consider seriously the possibility that the task of metaphysics should not consist in the search for the unconditional, he found an original solution: for us, with our discursive understanding, the unconditional is not given but assigned. What we are truly concerned with is not the transcendent and unknown cause of our appearances, such as monads, substantial forms, real essences, God, or anything else traditionally proposed to solve this problem. Rather, what we are dealing with is the rule of the advance of the cognitive synthesis by means of which the sensible objects are experienced and cognized by us (B 526; Kant 1998: 514–15). (See also chapter 13 below.)

This restraint on the valid application of the principle of sufficient reason to the conditions of the possibility of experience does not show that metaphysical principles – such as the favorite of Leibniz: "Nature makes no leaps" – are false or meaningless. They could still be useful in guiding our empirical and scientific research. But we must realize that in imposing them we do not make any determinative judgment about the world as it is in itself, as Leibniz assumed. Without as yet having the benefit of the distinction between determinative and reflective judgments, which he later developed in the third *Critique*, the first *Critique* articulated the distinction in terms of "constitutive" and "regulative" use of reason. The former would enable us to expand concepts that are valid in the sensible world beyond the boundaries of possible experience, yet the antinomies revealed that any attempt to use the principle of pure reason in the constitutive way would lead to self-contradictions. In its regulative use, the principle of pure reason does not allow us to cognize what an object is as a thing in itself; nevertheless, it stimulates us to search for an ever more complete understanding of that object, insofar as it may be empirically given (CPR B 537, B 692; Kant 1998: 520–1, 602).

V

Underlying the seventeenth-century quarrels about the nature of substances was an always challenging problem concerning the relation of nature and reason, of the real and the rational. Most philosophers did not disagree so much with respect to whether a harmonious synthesis of the real and the rational exists, but with regard to how it could be explained and established. Locke, for instance, believed that everything that exists can, at least in principle, be rendered intelligible, but also subscribed to the view that the world is radically contingent. Hardly anyone was willing to follow him in endorsing both views. Leibniz gladly accepted the thesis of the intelligibility of the world but was uneasy about its radical contingency. If the world is indeed so contingent, would it not be the case that events occurring in it are arbitrary, and would not reality as a whole then be nonrational? Although Leibniz wanted to allow for contingency and individuality, his conception of rationality was too narrow to account for them. Many a reader has been baffled by his idea of a complete concept and wondered whether in the last account all truths, including truths of facts, do not turn out to be analytic for Leibniz. These exaggerations were due to his unshakable conviction that a complete explanation of anything that happens must be pursued to its farthest end, that it must touch the bottom. And that bottom could only be some metaphysical stopping point: substantial forms or essences, or – ultimately – God (see Lovejoy 1936: 148). Since the principle of sufficient reason, as the principle used to explain truths of facts, was interpreted by Leibniz in teleological terms, the combination of these assumptions led him to maintain that in the end even the seemingly most accidental happening must have a profound teleological explanation.

A paradoxical thing about rationality is that, when conceived as complete, as excluding all arbitrariness, it transforms itself into a kind of irrationality. Voltaire mocked Leibniz that, in his infinite wisdom and goodness, God must have created legs so that we can wear stockings on them. Clarke similarly reminded Leibniz of the celebrated ass of Buridan: having no sufficient reason to prefer either of the two equally large and

appetizing balls of hay equidistant from his nose, this perfectly rational ass starved to death (see Lovejoy 1936: 331). Less humorous but more damaging for Leibniz was Hume's criticism of causality, which opened a huge gap between the real and the rational; it seemed to falsify rather than confirm the unity of nature and reason. Hume suspected that things in the world need not be what we think of them, that they may be untouched by the allegedly universal and necessary principles of reason. We are thus back to the Lockean thesis of the radical contingency of the world. This time, it was coupled with Humean skepticism not only with regard to the world of our senses but the supersensible as well: Hume was ready to commit anything metaphysical to the flames.

A systematic examination of the nature and limitations of pure reason in the first *Critique* did not convince Kant that any metaphysical project is illegitimate, as Hume argued, but that it could not be carried out in way in which Leibniz and pre-Critical Kant assumed. Perhaps the *Critique* did not make sufficiently clear just how important this constructive – rather than merely negative – goal was for Kant, but the works written after 1781 leave very little doubt about that. In the first *Critique* the main objective was to show that metaphysics is possible as a rigorous intellectual discipline, rather than as an unrestrained dogmatic speculation. But after the publication of that work, which Kant himself considered a prolegomena, the emphasis shifted toward developing a full-blown metaphysics and showing what, as a science, it is about. Then the similarities with Leibniz became far more pronounced and Kant even used the old Leibnizian terminology to define metaphysics as the passage from the sensible to the supersensible (20.260 Kant 2002: 353).

In Leibniz, this ascent has two forms, which are really two aspects of the same process: cognitive and teleological. The principle of sufficient reason leads to a proof of the existence of God, and it simultaneously grounds a teleological account of the real; the universe is teleological both as a whole and in every one of its parts. The synthesis of the cognitive and the teleological moments is captured by the principle of preestablished harmony; by means of which Leibniz attempted to reconcile his conception of nature and his understanding of God.

Kant's first *Critique* demonstrated that there can be no cognitive access to the supersensible. The third *Critique* restrained the other aspect of Leibniz's doctrine, his teleology. To claim that God's intellect chooses among the infinite number of possible worlds and permits the actualization of the best of them, was for Kant yet another example of an amphiboly, an anthropomorphic attribution of the human concept of purpose to the absolute. The fact that for our intellect there must be a difference between the possible and the actual should not mislead us to take for granted that such a distinction must also exist for God's intellect. It is a peculiar limitation of the human mind that makes it possible, even indispensable, to use the concept of purpose to give teleological explanations. Kant agreed with Leibniz that the concept of purpose points toward the supersensible, but emphatically denied that it is sufficient to take us there since it ultimately reflects only how we are constrained to think about organisms and living nature (5.401–10; Kant 2000: 271–9). (See also chapters 26, 27, and 29.)

Despite such restraints, Kant rarely wavered in his belief that the gap between the sensible and the supersensible could be overcome. His critical stance was that this could be accomplished, if at all, only through the concept of freedom, only if the distinction between the actual and the possible is treated in terms of "is" and "ought."

That discussion, however, is out of our range, for it would take us to Kant's moral philosophy.

VI

When he wrote that "the *Critique of Pure Reason* may be the true apology for Leibniz," Kant earnestly spoke in his defense. Leibniz had to be defended not only from his disciples who misinterpreted him, but because there was much that was right and true in his philosophy. Kant grew up with that philosophy and it provided a standard against which he measured himself from his earliest writings to his latest. Although there was much in Leibniz that served as a stimulus – even a foundation – of his own thinking, Kant never tried to follow his exact footsteps. As was the case with Leibniz, Kant's only loyalty was to search for and serve the truth. His work was thus an apology for Leibniz in that other sense as well: it was an acknowledgment of the mistakes and oversights which his great predecessor committed and which needed to be corrected.

The fact that such corrections and deviations were numerous should not prevent us from recognizing that Leibniz and Kant not only took off from neighboring harbors, but also that their final destination was similar. For both thinkers metaphysics was the heart of philosophy, and for both it dealt with the passage from the sensible to the supersensible. Their disputes were not so much about the destination but about the journey. Kant was convinced that without his critique of pure reason the passage was not only unsafe but perhaps impossible. His Critical philosophy was to provide a compass needed to avoid the fog of metaphysical illusions into which all of previous metaphysical expeditions, Leibniz's included, got trapped.

Is it so clear, however, that Kant himself was always able to avoid all of these traps? Consider once more the relation of the real and the rational. Leibniz was firmly convinced of the complete overlap of the real and the rational in every aspect of being. If there is something that we do not yet know, the question is not whether it is knowable, but how it should be approached, so we could grasp and explain it fully. Kant demonstrated that things are far more complex. The real as such is not entirely transparent to our cognitive faculties, no matter how we approach it. Some aspects of the real simply cannot be known, due to no fault of our methods or cognitive abilities. Our knowledge is of appearances, not of the supersensible, not of things as they are in themselves. This, however, was not the end of the matter. When Kant used the phrase "things in themselves" interchangeably with "noumena," he clearly hinted that, like Leibniz, he also took the real to be ultimately rational: it may be unknowable but still rational. It is far from clear that Kant was entitled to such radical rationalism.

Things are similarly puzzling when we consider the relation between the rational and the ideal. Both philosophers took it for granted that there must be complete overlap between the rational and the ideal, without much of an argument and without considering any alternative. For Leibniz, God is the ultimate point in which all the arguments end and which guarantees the unity, order, and harmony of the entire creation. For Kant, the search for the unconditional is the deepest need of reason, and it finds its expression in the "ideas of reason." Although the unconditional is not accessible to us in knowing, it was considered by Kant as intelligible and accessible

through acting. Upon what grounds it could be asserted that the unconditional must be intelligible was not explained by either of the two philosophers. Nor did they question the search for the unconditional: Why is it that the unity, order, and harmony of the world could not be explained in any other way, but by invoking the unknown yet intelligible unconditional? Why must reason search for the unconditional in the first place? Like Leibniz, Kant took the model of creation for granted: it is only when we think of the real as something created and conditioned that we expect that there must also be something not created and unconditional, something that brought about the world in which we live. Almost the entire tradition of Western metaphysics developed in the thick shadow of God-Creator. Yet a truly critical metaphysics, which Kant's philosophy aspired to be, should not have left any assumption unchallenged, including these concerning the rationality of the noumenal and the ideal, as well as the model of creation.

There were indeed deep ties and similarities between the two great German philosophers. Not all of them should have been preserved by Kant.

References and Further Reading

- Allison, Henry (1973). *The Kant-Eberhard Controversy*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Beck, Lewis White (1969). *Early German Philosophy: Kant and his Predecessors*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press.
- Cassirer, Ernst (1981). *Kant's Life and Thought*, tr. James Haden. New Haven: Yale University Press. (Original work published 1918.)
- Dewey, John (1969). Leibniz's new essays concerning human understanding. In John Dewey, *The Early Works, 1882–1898* (pp. 253–435). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press. (Original work published 1888.)
- Furth, Montgomery (1967). *Monadology*. *Philosophical Review*, 76: 169–200.
- Kant, Immanuel (1992). *Theoretical Philosophy, 1755–1770*, tr. and ed. David Walford. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, Immanuel (1998). *Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. and eds. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood. New York: Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1781.)
- Kant, Immanuel (2000). *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, tr. and eds. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews. New York: Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1790.)
- Kant, Immanuel (2002). *Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*, tr. Henry Allison, Gary Hatfield, Peter Heath, and Michael Friedman. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm (1952). *Theodicy*, ed. Austin Farrer, tr. E. M. Huggard. New Haven: Yale University Press. (Original work published 1710.)
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm (1991). *Discourse on Metaphysics. Correspondence with Arnauld*. *Monadology*. Tr. George Montgomery. La Salle: Open Court.
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm (1996). *New Essays on Human Understanding*, tr. and eds. Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennett. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1765.)
- Loemker, L. E., ed. (1969). *G. W. Leibniz: Philosophical Papers and Letters*, 2nd ed. Dordrecht: Reidel.
- Lovejoy, Arthur (1936). *The Great Chain of Being*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Mates, Benson (1986). *The Philosophy of Leibniz: Metaphysics and Language*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Paton, H. J. (1969). Kant on the errors of Leibniz. In Lewis White Beck (ed.), *Kant Studies Today*. La Salle: Open Court.

Rescher, Nicholas (1991). G. W. Leibniz's *Monadology*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Rutherford, Donald (1995). *Metaphysics: The late period*. In Nicholas Jolley (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Leibniz* (pp. 124–75). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schopenhauer, Arthur (1974). *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*, tr. E. F. J. Payne. La Salle: Open Court. (Original work published 1813.)

Vleeschauwer, Herman-J. de (1962). *The Development of Kantian Thought: The History of a Doctrine*, tr. A. R. C. Duncan. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons. (Original work published 1939.)

Kant's Debt to the British Empiricists

WAYNE WAXMAN

The magnitude and principal focus of Kant's debt to empiricism are not in doubt. Kant credited Hume with rousing him from dogmatic slumbers and imparting a radically new direction to his investigations (*Prol.* 4.260). The alarm was sounded by the skeptical conclusion of Hume's investigations of the concept of cause and effect and the principle that every beginning of existence must have a cause. Once extended to all a priori concepts and cognition, the problem identified by Hume suffices, in Kant's view, to put into question the very possibility of metaphysics itself. He thus considered Hume's challenge to be of such urgency as to compel metaphysicians to set aside all other occupations until they could answer the question, how are synthetic a priori judgments possible? (*Prol.* 4.277–8).

Less widely appreciated than Kant's debt to Hume for the problem his philosophy is dedicated to solving is his debt to Hume for pointing the way to its solution:

One cannot, without feeling a certain pain, behold how entirely every one of [Hume's] opponents – Reid, Oswald, Beattie, and lastly Priestley – missed the point of his problem [*Aufgabe*] . . . It was not the question whether the concept of cause is correct, serviceable, and in respect of the whole of our cognition of nature indispensable, for this Hume never doubted. Rather, it was the question whether the concept is thought through reason a priori and in this way has an inner truth independent of all experience and therefore also a far more extended employment, not limited to objects of experience: here is where Hume expected a breakthrough [*Eröffnung*]. It was indeed only the issue [*Rede*] of the origin of this concept, not of its indispensability in use: if only the former were ascertained, then everything concerning the conditions of its use and the sphere in which it can be valid would already of itself have been given. (*Prol.* 4.258–9) [Author's translations throughout]

Neither Hume nor Kant doubted the normative correctness and indispensability of concepts like cause and effect to objective representation. Yet, for them, this was quite beside the point philosophically. Their paramount concern was the origin of the concept as a representation in our mind: whether it is "thought through reason a priori" (*Prol.* 4.257), whether it is a mere "bastard of the imagination" (*Prol.* 4.258), or whether it arises from some other source. Hume pointed the way for Kant because he recognized that psychological accounts of the origin of the concepts at the heart of age-old