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Volume 202

Miklós Vassányi

Anima Mundi: The Rise of the World Soul Theory in Modern German Philosophy



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ANIMA MUNDI

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THE RISE OF THE WORLD SOUL THEORY IN MODERN
GERMAN PHILOSOPHY

Miklós Vassányi

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The Rise of the World Soul Theory in Modern
German Philosophy

Miklós Vassányi
Károli Gáspár University of the Hungarian Reformed Church



Springer

Miklós Vassányi
Faculty of Arts
Department of General Humanities
Károli University of the Hungarian Reformed Church
Hungary
mvassanyi@yahoo.com

ISBN 978-90-481-8795-9 e-ISBN 978-90-481-8796-6
DOI 10.1007/978-90-481-8796-6
Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg London New York

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Acknowledgments

The present study is a thoroughly revised version of the dissertation I wrote under the promotorship of Professor Dr. Martin Moors and defended in September 2007 at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven. Therefore, I reiterate all the acknowledgments I then made, as follows:

I thank my parents who brought me up, supported me and bore me with patience.

I thank my honorary parents, i.e., my parents-in-law, who have always helped me and my narrower family in every conceivable manner.

I thank my promoter, Dr. Martin Moors, Professor of the *Centrum voor Metafysica*, for his scientific advice, patience, kindest assistance and trust throughout the project. I also thank him for providing the official financial support without which the tremendous amount of international interlibrary loans, photocopying and microfilming related to the project could never have been carried out.

I thank the *Bijzonder Onderzoeksfonds* of the *Katholieke Universiteit Leuven* for the five-year-long scholarship that made possible the entire research project.

I thank Mr. Stefan Derouck of the *Interbibliothecair Leenverkeer*-office of the K.U.L. for his very accurate, fast and effective cooperation on the project, in getting copies of some of the most unreal books and microfilms. Though I sometimes made ten requests a day, he invariably remained calm and friendly.

I thank my wife Ágota, *de zoete geur van het leven*, for her unstinting support and love.

I thank the heavenly Father for all these people, *et de m'avoir porté et supporté* –
ὄλωλα, σέσηπα· רַחֵם אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶת כָּל אֵלֵינוּ

the author.

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Signs

⟨ ⟩	Annotations and interpretive remarks; editorial titles
[]	To be deleted
{ }	To be added or corrected
“ ”	Literal citation
‘ ’	<i>Ad sensum</i> citation; metaphorically etc. used term
» «	Citation within citation

Chapter 1

Introduction

1 The Concept of the Soul of the World in Plato

The theory of a soul of the world (*ψυχή τοῦ κόσμου*, *anima mundi*) is almost as ancient as European philosophy itself. As far as is known, PLATO conceived of it first in *Timaios* 34 b 3–37 c 5 (but he returned to it also in Book 10 of the *Laws*, 896 d 10–898 c 8). The doctrine of the world soul – not endorsed by ARISTOTLE except perhaps indirectly by implication of his theory of the active intellect (cf. *De anima* Γ 5, 430 a 10–25, etc.) – then received great philosophical emphasis in the Stoic and neo-Platonic schools, which essentially transformed it according to their respective metaphysical intuitions. In order to understand, more distinctly, the philosophical content of the concept of a soul of the world, we begin our enquiry with a brief presentation and analysis of PLATO's and, respectively, PLOTINUS' concepts of the world soul.¹ This will also help us see the specificity of the early modern concept of the *Weltseele*.

In PLATO's account of the *genesis* of the world soul, the demiurge puts this soul together from, essentially, Being or substance (*οὐσία*), the Same (*ταυτόν*) and the Different (*ἕτερον*), by a two-step procedure (first, *οὐσία* is itself prepared from a mixture of the *indivisible*, *ἀμέριστος*, and the *divisible*, *μεριστή*, kinds of substance). From the resulting composite, the god then forms two circles, one of which will belong to the Same, the other to the Different. The material substance of the world is placed, subsequently, *inside* the two circles so they pervade and cover *from outside* (*ἔξωθεν*) the world. The world soul is thus everywhere in the material frame of the world, *interwoven* (*διαπλεκείσα*) with it. Still, it remains the (chronologically and) hierarchically superior, self-sufficient, *per se* self-identical principle. The soul of the world then begins an unceasing (*ἄπανστος*) and rational or intelligent (*ἐμφορων*) life by beginning to move harmoniously and by its own power. The Platonic world soul is hence possessed not only with the vegetative and sensitive faculties but also with

¹On the Latin Stoic concept of a soul of the world, see pp. 217–219 (SENECA on the *anima mundi*).

the rational capacity (*λογισμοῦ μετέχουσα*). It is hereby the most excellent among the things which ‘have been called into existence’ (*τῶν γεννηθέντων*) and are not unchangeable.

The *function* of the soul of the world is to recognize the identity and difference, the proper place and function of each individual substance (*οὐσία*) in relation to the things that come to be, *and* that are, respectively, eternal and unchangeable. It carries on a constant internal inaudible discourse inside itself as it imperceptibly moves around itself and comes into contact with every single thing, dissoluble or partless, that constitutes the universe.

PLATO’S doctrine of the soul of the world is perhaps, first and foremost, the expression of his fundamental convictions that, first, being and cognition are correlated according to a certain proportion (from coming-into-being up to unchanging being on the ontological scale, there is a gradual transition from opinion into true knowledge on the epistemological scale), and that, second, whatever has a soul is ontologically higher-ranking (is a more perfect image of the unchangeable ideas) than what is inanimate. The metaphysical thesis of the (proportional) correlation of existence and cognition seems to be present in the Platonic idea that the essential function of the world soul is to come to know, and to make (conjectural or categorical) judgments of the identity and difference of, every finite thing it comes across in its circular movement in and around the world (cf. 37 a 2–c 3). Hence, even in the sphere of coming-into-being and passing-away, in the sphere of continuous change, there is no genesis or existence without a specific kind and degree of correlated knowledge: the respective orders of being and cognition are interdependent or, better, interlaced even in the sub-lunar world.

On the other hand, the thesis of the ontological precedence of spiritual substance over corporeal reality is manifest in the circumstance that PLATO attributes a soul to the material cosmos *at all*. The physical frame of the world is, to PLATO’S mind, an *ectypon* of the more than divine, transcendent ideas; it is thus itself divine. Therefore, it cannot lack a soul, for whatever lacks a soul occupies a lower, subordinate position on the ontological scale (30 b 1–c 2). The cosmos, in order to be a truly divine image of the ultimate, unalterable, intelligible reality, must be, in this way, a living being possessed of soul and even reason, “ζῶον ἔμψυχον ἔννοον” (30 b 8–c 1).

Now for PLATO, the *spiritual* substance of the world soul is not entirely *intelligible* though it is, as regards its faculties, *intellectual*. A small part of its tripartite (*οὐσία-ταύτόν-ἕτερον*) substantial composition derives from extended-divisible reality (“τῆς αὖ περὶ τὰ σώματα γιγνομένης μεριστῆς (οὐσίας)”, 35 a 2–3). Thus, while it is predominantly intelligible in point of substance, and fully intellectual in point of faculty, it still has an interface, a point of possible contact with physical reality. But despite the composite character of its substance, the world soul is the principle of the divine nature of the cosmos, and for this reason, the Platonic theory of the soul of the world may be generally characterized as a theory of *hypotaxis corporis sub animam*. By this, we denote a theory that does *not* involve the *mutual influx* of body and soul. Because the corporeal and spiritual principles do not have an equal ontological standing, but, rather, body is subordinated to soul, the body

does not exert an influence on the soul, but the soul does know, and make (probabilistic or assertive) judgments of, the several different parts of the body. Hence, PLATO's soul of the world is never passively subject to the varying conditions of the cosmic body but enjoys independence and impassibility from its influence; while, on the other hand, it does not direct by its particular volitions the movements of that body in the manner our soul controls our body.

The Platonic conception of the relationship between cosmic body and world soul is thus from the very beginning not *instar hominis*. Therefore, it does not pose a dialectic problem here that the cosmos, though it *is* conceived as a kind of living being, is not vested with organs of external sense perception; rather, the lack of such organs is seen as a sign of perfection, *autarchy*, and as a logical consequence of the all-embracing totality of the universe, which logically precludes the existence of anything beyond its bounds (cf. 33 c 1–6).²

2 The Concept of the Soul of the World in Plotinus

The *Plotinian* theory of the soul of the world (some of the key treatises on which are IV/1–2, IV/4:32, IV/7, IV/9, V/1, of the *Enneads*) increases the hypotaxis-character of the relationship between universal soul and cosmic body, and vests that soul with further essential functions. The world soul, for PLOTINUS, is *part* of the third principal *hypostasis* ('reality'), Soul, but its precise philosophical relationship to Soul-Hypostasis, on the one hand, and to the individual souls, on the other, is notoriously difficult to determine. Its five major functions are that it arranges (*κοσμεῖ*), moves (*κινεῖ*), vivifies (*ζῆν ποιεῖ*), deifies ("θεός ἐστι διὰ ταύτην ὁ κόσμος ὄδε"), and unifies ("ἓν ἐστι τῇ ταύτης δυνάμει ὁ κόσμος ὄδε") the cosmos,³ whereby it is also the principle of a universal (magical) sympathy in it.⁴ While it is clearly not subordinate to (or subjected to the influence of) the cosmic body, it is still asserted to be essentially one with the particular souls (cf. IV/9), though these are in many aspects exposed to the influence of their respective bodies. The metaphysical rationale for this is that soul is a reality which combines numeric unity and multiplicity in its essence: it is one and many at the same time. The original absolute unity of the transcendent generative principle, the One, τὸ ἓν, gradually breaks up as it explicates and hypostasizes its infinite potency (the One is the *δύναμις πάντων*, cf. V/1:7, 9–10) in the emanating realities of Mind and then Soul. But although the primordial unity of the Absolute is thus pluralized in the

²"ὀμμάτων τε γὰρ ἐπεδείτο οὐδέν, ὀρατὸν γὰρ οὐδὲν ὑπελείπετο ἕξωθεν, οὐδ' ἀκοῆς, οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀκουστόν· πνεῦμα τε οὐκ ἦν περιεστός δεόμενον ἀναπνοῆς, οὐδ' αὐ' τινος ἐπιδεῆς ἦν ὀργάνου σχεῖν ᾧ τὴν μὲν εἰς ἑαυτὸ τροφήν δέξοιτο, τὴν δὲ πρότερον ἐξικμασμένην ἀποπέμψοι πάλιν"

³Cf. V/1:2.

⁴Cf. IV/4:32.

emanations, these invariably conserve a degree of substantial unity. From the perspective of the transcendent *origo*, their unity is more conspicuous than from the perspective of the manifold intelligible, then spiritual, realities, which ultimately emerge from the necessary overflow of the One. It is in this manner that the essentially one soul ‘gives herself into multitude and does not give herself into it’ (‘ὡς μία δοῦσα ἑαυτὴν εἰς πλῆθος καὶ οὐ δοῦσα’).⁵ It is an immaterial substance that is one and many at the same time. That this essentially unified substance has *different* simultaneous sensations and perceptions in its individualized parts, the individual souls, is not conceived by PLOTINUS to be a problem: he ingeniously argues that even the individual soul has different simultaneous sensations in its organically diversified parts within the individual body (cf. IV/9:2).⁶

The Plotinian theory of the soul of the world, only adumbrated here, is thus a systematically elaborated, and in many essential aspects altered, development of the Platonic conception of the world soul theory as a theory of *hypotaxis corporis sub animam*. We may say in general terms that in the Platonic-Plotinian theory, the soul of the world is conceived as an at least spiritual, or even fully intelligible, substance that is two degrees lower on the ontological scale than the representative(s) of the highest order of perfection (the ideas in PLATO, and the One in PLOTINUS). In both these metaphysical schemes, there is a mediator (the demiurge in PLATO, and Mind in PLOTINUS) between the rank of the most divine order and that of the world soul. The whole theory of the world soul is, here, part of a cosmic theology, which conceives of the universe, on the one hand, as a perfect image of the transcendent realities and as an enchanting expression of their power, and, on the other hand, as an all-embracing system that pre-determines the place of the individual living being, but also organically includes it in its higher unity and harmony.

3 The Major Difference Between the Classical and the Early Modern Conceptions of the World Soul

Now in (early) modernity, the ‘standard’ theory of the soul of the world changes in almost every aspect, while the general philosophical attitude toward it also turns *negative*, at least before the arrival of early German Romanticism. The dominating concept of the world soul in eighteenth-century German philosophy is more Aristotelian (in the sense of the definition of the soul as ‘the first perfection of a potentially living, physical body’, in *De anima* B 1, 412 a 27–28) in character than

⁵Cf. IV/9:5, 3–4. – Cf. also the continuation of the passage, where PLOTINUS asserts that Soul is “... ἰκανὴ γὰρ πᾶσι παρασχεῖν ἑαυτὴν καὶ μένειν μία• δύναται γὰρ εἰς πάντα ἅμα (scil. παρασχεῖν ἑαυτὴν,) καὶ ἐκάστου οὐκ ἀποτέμνεται πάντη• τὸ αὐτὸ οὖν ἐν πολλοῖς.” (*ibid.*, 4–7)

⁶On PLOTINUS’ theory of the world soul, see also Section 5 of Chapter 3 below.

Platonic: for LEIBNIZ, one determinative component of the concept of ‘soul’ is the *harmonia singulariter praestabilita corporis cum anima*. The Leibnizian theory of the pre-established harmony of the body with the soul implies that the body moves in harmony with the particular volitions of the soul, while the soul perceives external reality in harmony with the information yielded by the sense organs of the body, *without* real mutual influx taking place between them. Thus, they are on a hierarchically almost equal footing, insofar as there is no soul without a body of which it is the *entelecheia prima*, the internal form. By application of such a conception of soul to the world soul theory, the latter will inevitably be conceived as a theory of a *parataxis corporis cum anima*, of a coordination of mind and body.

But as we have just suggested, the change in the internal logical structure of the concept of the world soul is accompanied in early modernity by a fundamental turn in the philosophical evaluation of the theory itself. This turn is rooted in the new philosophical-theological conception of the relationship of the Absolute with conditioned (created) reality. For a rationalistic Christian theology, God as the *omnipotent* Creator and permanent Sustainer of the phenomenal as well as intelligible universe, needs no intermediary to interact between Him and nature. On the contrary, it would categorically contradict the concept of omnipotence to postulate an omnipresent spiritual agent that would order and organize nature by delegation of the power of God. It is a principle of early modern philosophical theology that God always chooses the simplest means to achieve the greatest possible effect. What need is there then for omnipotency combined with omniscience to insert an extra link between Himself and creation?

4 The Chief Objective and the Structural Outline of the Enquiry

It is from this question that our enquiry begins. We shall follow the amazing, topsy-turvy course of the complex, simultaneously *theological, metaphysical, natural philosophical*, and even *moral philosophical* theory of the world soul as it ran, approximately, from BRUNO, BÖHME, SPINOZA and LEIBNIZ up to and including the unexpected turn it took in early German Romanticism with, especially, BAADER and SCHELLING. In more detail, the theoretical questions behind this mainly historical enquiry will be the following: Can God be conceived as the soul of the world and, if not, in what sense can the world soul be a representative or locum tenens of God in nature? What can the world soul be in terms of substance? How can the world soul move and animate the natural world? How to conceive of individual moral responsibility on the hypothesis of a single unitary soul for all mankind?

As concerns chronology, the two earliest thinkers whom we discuss in detail, because of the influence they exerted on early German Romanticism, are Giordano BRUNO (1548–1600) and Jakob BÖHME (1575–1624). The main period, however, which we cover is the time stretching from around the middle of the seventeenth century up to and including the late eighteenth century, together with the period of

early German Romanticism. The most recent text to be discussed is SCHELLING's *Die Weltalter* (1811–1814). The rise of the world soul theory in this period naturally fits into the broader philosophical-theological problem complex of the relation between the Finite and the Infinite, insofar as the world soul was generally seen by the early German Romantics as a double-natured interface between Nature and God.

As we are now setting out to reconstruct the constitutive elements of the problem of the Soul of the World especially in (early) modern German philosophy, within the bounds of a discussion concerning the problematic relationship between God and Nature, we must address ourselves, in Part I, to some leading philosophers of the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth century. The debate that started at the close of the *siècle d'or*, and that involved thinkers like LEIBNIZ, J. Ch. STURM and MALEBRANCHE, originally revolved around one central question of natural philosophy: how God ensures that Nature operates, or, to put it under a different aspect, how immediate God's presence (*praesentia*) and influence (*concursus*) are in the operations of the natural world.

This particular debate is the most convenient point of departure for an investigation into later theories on the world soul, since the problem of an *anima mundi* had already emerged here. The relevant ideas of LEIBNIZ, especially, were systematically presented against a rational theological background in the *Schulphilosophie* of WOLFF and BAUMGARTEN. The Leibnizian school then fell asunder with a third important professor, G. PLOUCQUET, whose short natural philosophical treatises were avidly read by the young SCHELLING. These scholars will be considered by us as a group because they all rejected (except for LEIBNIZ in some shorter texts from his earliest intellectual period and in one single text from his mature period), on systematic philosophical grounds, the existence of a world soul, while some of them (LEIBNIZ and PLOUCQUET) represented specific kinds of hylozoism in natural philosophy.

In Part II, we have to examine a keynote tradition in eighteenth-century natural philosophy: physico-theology. Although none of the classical early modern physico-theologists posited the existence of a universal soul (most of them were Scriptural monotheists), their works constituted a first frame of reference in the metaphysical orientation of natural philosophy for the following generation of young German Romantics. BAADER and SCHELLING had physico-theological books ready at hand on their desks, and their own writings rely heavily on the scientific achievements of their natural philosophical forerunners who based faith on science. The physico-theologists are also interesting 'by omission' i.e., because they did *not* draw conclusions about the world soul,⁷ whereas several members of the new generation of young German Romantic natural philosophers, including BAADER and SCHELLING, did come to the explicit conclusion that a world soul exists. Hence,

⁷The only exception seems to be FÉNELON, who explicitly rejects the hypothesis of the world soul in its primary meaning, but applies the term '*âme du monde*' to God in a metaphorical sense (*Traité de l'existence de Dieu*, 1763; see Section 2 of Chapter 4).

the historical question emerges as to *why* a previous philosophical relation to the concept of the world soul so radically changed after the grand physico-theologists of the late eighteenth century.

In Part II, then, we first give an introduction into the sources of classical eighteenth-century physico-theology (e.g., into the works of the English DERHAM, the Dutch NIEUWENTYT, the French FÉNELON, PLUCHE, Bernardin de SAINT-PIERRE, etc., some of them founders of the modern natural sciences). Next, we present the cosmological picture of the world physico-theology left to the new, Romantic generation of scientists, and reconstruct the logical structure of the argument, analyzing the major counter-arguments as well. Finally, we discuss how physico-theology generally conceived of the presence of God, and in what ways it was a source of philosophical inspiration for the Romantics.

In a third attempt at mapping the historical horizon behind our main question, we will have to go back, in Part III, to five relatively disparate thinkers: BÖHME, ÖTINGER, SPINOZA, LESSING and BRUNO, at least three of whom displayed a common deep interest in the medieval Jewish mystical tradition called Cabbala. Although these five philosophers conceived of different fundamental metaphysical ideas, all of them played an essential role in the spiritual formation of the early German Romantics, especially by virtue of the manner in which they philosophically thought the relationship between universal Nature and God. Several of them theorized about the existence of a world soul. The Cabbalistic theology of BÖHME and ÖTINGER influenced the thought of the young SCHELLING through its cosmogony conceived as theogony, and through its unsystematical concept of a *Weltseele*. Next, SPINOZA's philosophy, erroneously identified by BAYLE with the world soul theory, was a starting point also for LESSING to think God, if in a hypothetical manner, as the soul of the universe. As a matter of historical fact, when LESSING's conversations with JACOBI were published (1785), they raised a wave of interest in Spinozism and the world soul theory. The mystically inspired BRUNO, then, who interested JACOBI and made a lasting imprint on the thought of SCHELLING, conceived the substantial form of the divinized universe as the *anima del mondo*. The philosophical influence of these thinkers reached an apogee during the earlier part of the so-called 'Goethezeit', and it is no exaggeration to say that the metaphysical thought of the early German Romantic generation was imbibed with it.

Thus, Parts I up to and including III will offer a historical deduction of the concepts and theories that are essential for us to reconstruct the *Problemgeschichte* of the early German Romantic discussion of the idea of the universal soul.

We put the main philosophical question of our study in Part IV, where we deal with the relevant texts of the two most important early German Romantic representatives of the world soul theory. FRANZ VON BAADER, in *Vom Wärmestoff* (1786) and F. W. J. SCHELLING, in *Von der Weltseele* (1798), expounded theories which were meant to strictly demonstrate, by philosophical as well as natural scientific means, that there exists an omnipervasive, all-animating, material but imperceptible universal soul subordinate to God. We have chosen these authors because in the early phase of German Romanticism, only they worked out full, logically coherent, book-length

theories of the world soul. First, we shall consider in what historical philosophical context these texts were written within the respective *oeuvres* of the two philosophers. We will then offer systematic analyses of their ideas, ultimately to put the question *why* there occurred such an important change in the natural scientific as well as philosophical theological convictions of these leading thinkers of the first German Romantic generation, as compared to the almost unanimous consent of the most important traditional philosophical schools before them, that there may not be a world soul. We shall try to situate our answer to this query in the frame of the changing philosophical perception of the relationship there is between the finite universe and its infinite ground of existence.

5 Thematic Limitations and Terminology

Such a comprehensive investigation is, however, necessarily open-ended. It has been impossible, among other things, to elaborate more on the difference between the ancient, medieval, and modern conceptions of the world soul. It has likewise been impossible to include a separate chapter on KANT's pre-critical and critical (transcendental), always negative philosophical relation to the concept of the soul of the world. An extension in this direction would demand completely new research (which, however, we hope to carry out in a later phase of the work). Thus, the main accent of the present enquiry is on how the reception of the *Weltseele*-concept evolved from an almost universal initial rejection in the early German Enlightenment towards an almost unanimous acceptance in early German Romanticism, in the perspective of the relation of the Finite with the Infinite.

As far as terminology is concerned, then, the first thing to say is that by "early German Romanticism" we refer to a category of authors and a time span broader than what is generally understood by the German technical term *Frühromantik*.⁸ Although, in especially Section 3 of Chapter 8, we will refer to thinkers and poets belonging to the group strictly called *Frühromantik* as well, still, for the sake of convenience, we shall use the expression "early German Romanticism" in a more general sense which extends to the early BAADER and SCHELLING too.⁹

Next, we shall call the doctrine that a specific author formulated about the world soul either a 'theory' or a 'hypothesis', depending on the *more* or *less* affirmative character of his doctrine. In neutral cases, we use 'theory'. We shall call the notion

⁸As M. FRANK says, "*Üblicherweise versteht man darunter die philosophisch-literarische Produktion des Kreises von Freunden, die sich zwischen 1796 und 1800 in Berlin und/oder Jena zusammenfanden und deren Mittelpunkt das Haus der Brüder Schlegel in Jena werden sollte: also Autor(inn)en wie Wackenroder und Tieck, Novalis und Schleiermacher, Friedrich und Wilhelm Schlegel, Caroline und Dorothea Schlegel*" (FRANK, p. 41).

⁹On especially the young SCHELLING's standing to the *Frühromantik* strictly taken, see FRANK, lectures 1, 15, and 26.

that a particular thinker had of the world soul either a ‘concept’ or an ‘idea’, depending on the *more* or *less* empirical manner in which he posited this notion. Again, in neutral cases, we say ‘concept’. Further, when we, in the following pages, talk about a ‘*general* world soul theory’, we leave it undetermined in the particular context of our discussion if within the frame of the theory, the world soul is or is not identified with God. By ‘*strong* world soul theory’, we designate a theory that identifies God with the world soul. Finally, when we say ‘*classic* world soul theory’, we refer to a theory in which the entire world is considered (on the analogy of the human being) as a cosmic living being, the soul of which is the world soul, and the body of which is Nature.

‘Emanation’, an important term in our enquiry (especially in Part III), seems to pose a particular semantic problem. In the medieval *Christian* Latin philosophical vocabulary, ‘*emanatio*’ could be used in the metaphysically neutral meaning ‘emerging, arising’. In this meaning, it could enter the definition of ‘*creatio*’ (“*creatio, quae est emanatio totius esse, est ex non ente quod est nihil*”, Th. AQUINAS, *STh* I, q. xlv, a. 1). In a *Neoplatonic* Latin nomenclature, however, it could also carry the pregnant meaning of the post-classical Greek *πρόδος*, i.e., ‘coming forth, outpouring (of essence)’. Throughout our study, we will use this term in this specific sense, with reference to the generation of a thing from a higher reality or God by way of an outflowing of essence, as distinguished from *creatio ex nihilo* in particular. ‘Emanation’ in this sense allows of an (undetermined) degree of consubstantiality between the emanating thing and its source or cause.

Let us now try to look “*through nature up to nature’s God*,”¹⁰ with the eyes of some of the greatest masters of the European history of philosophy.

¹⁰Alexander POPE: *An Essay on Man*, Epistle IV, line 332 (ELWIN *et al.* eds., vol. II., p. 453; see Section 13 of Chapter 7).

Part I

**Opposition to the Identification of the
World Soul with God in the *Philosophia
Leibnitio-Wolffiana*: The Theory of
God as the ‘*ens extramundanum*.’**

Chapter 2

Presentation of the Texts Relevant for the Concept of an *anima mundi*. The Immediate Natural Theological Setting of the Problem

1 *Leibniz's Mature Position on the anima mundi in Deum non esse mundi animam (appr. 1683–1686), De ipsa natura... (1698), Considerations sur la doctrine d'un Esprit Universel Unique (1702)*

Our analysis of Gottfried Wilhelm LEIBNIZ's (1646–1716) position on the world soul will be restricted here to his mature views, as they are expounded in three texts, in which he is explicitly confronted with, and either rejects or just tolerates the theory of an *anima mundi* or *ame du monde*:¹ the short manuscript note *God is Not the Soul of the World (Deum non esse mundi animam, of appr. 1683–1686)*; the better known *Nature Itself, or, The Inherent Force and Activity of Created Things (De ipsa natura, sive de vi insita actionibusque creaturarum, published in the Acta eruditorum, Leipzig 1698, as a contribution to the philosophical debate on the concept of 'nature' between Altdorf professor J. Ch. STURM and chief physician of the city of Kiel and professor of medicine G. Ch. SCHELHAMMER)*;² and the lesser cited

¹Most of LEIBNIZ's works are cited from the editions of C. I. GERHARDT (see under GERHARDT, C. I., 1965 and GERHARDT, C. I., 1971, respectively, in the bibliography), since the critical edition (see under AV in the bibliography) of his philosophical works has not yet reached the period relevant for us. *De ipsa natura...*, then, is in vol. 4 of GERHARDT, C. I., 1965, pp. 504–516; the *Considerations...* in vol. 6, pp. 529–538.

By contrast, the *Deum non esse mundi animam*, an earlier text, is cited from the critical edition (AV), in which it is in VI. Reihe, IV. Band, Teil B, p. 1492 (№ 293). – In our citations, we follow LEIBNIZ's original orthography everywhere, which only accidentally indicates the various accents of the letter 'e' etc. in texts written in French.

²The important STURM-SCHELHAMMER debate had gone through the following five stages of development:

1. It had been ignited by famed chemist Robert BOYLE's semi-anonymous *De ipsa natura sive libera in receptam naturae notionem disquisitio ad amicum* (1687; a translation from English, with the English original written by 1682). This relatively long treatise discarded the scientific usage of the term 'nature' in its Peripatetic acceptation, as "*Principium & Causa Motus & Quietus ejus, in quo est, primo per se, & non secundum accidens*" (cf. *sectio tertia*; p. 22), and proposed the apologetical theory that God does not rely on the particular internal *naturae* of things when

Considerations of the Doctrine of a Unique Universal Spirit (Considerations sur la doctrine d'un Esprit Universel Unique, a manuscript of 1702). We have chosen these texts because, together, they present LEIBNIZ's most important, mature arguments against the soul of the world theory in the context of his natural as well as moral philosophy. In fact, however, he had dealt much more with this theory, which attracted his philosophical interest from his earlier years till the very end of his life. Probably the last, unfavourable mentions of the *Ame du Monde* theory are found in his famous 1715–1716 debate by correspondence with Samuel CLARKE concerning space as the *sensorium* of God (cf. Section 9 of Chapter 6).

It is important to point out here that LEIBNIZ entertained *favourable* views about the soul of the world during his early career, especially in the group of texts collectively referred to as the '*De summa rerum*'.³ In particular, *On the Secrets of the Sublime, that is, on the Summit of Things (De arcanis sublimium vel de summa rerum*, 11 February 1676) and *On the Union of Soul and Body (De unione animae et corporis*, presumably

operating the physical universe, but maintains the regular course of natural teleological processes by establishing universal laws of motion, which can locally control the mechanism of the world (cf. *sectio prima*, p. 4; *sectio octava*, p. 187). BOYLE sees an analogy between the respective philosophical functions of the Peripatetic idea of 'internal nature' (*φύσις*), and the concept of *anima mundi*, but he rejects both (cf. p. 8, 52, 166).

2. Next, Altdorf professor J. Ch. STURM wrote a sharp, 43-page-long treatise *Idolum naturae similiumque nominum vanorum... deturbandi conatus philosophicus* (1692; see an analysis in Section 1 of Chapter 3) in favour of BOYLE's position.

3. STURM's booklet was countered by G. Ch. SCHELHAMMER's lengthy *Natura sibi et medicis vindicata sive De Natura Liber bipartitus* (1697), which defended, especially from a medical point of view, the notion of 'nature' in the sense of a *principium movendi* (see his thesis in *cap. V/xx*: "*Dantur ergo omnino praeter Deum quae movent, etsi prius mota...*"; p. 103), and pretended explicitly to refute STURM's *Idolum naturae* (cf. p. 57).

4. This in turn elicited STURM's reaction, a 30-page-long essay directed exclusively against SCHELHAMMER, published in (or soon after) April 1698 under the title *Exercitatio philosophica de natura sibi incassum vindicata* etc. Here STURM precisely circumscribes what usage of the term *natura* he rejects (cf. *caput III*), and makes his point clear again that "...*hujus unius (scil. legis sive voluntatis Dei) efficacia & virtute, nulla alia uspiam interveniente, peragantur omnia...*" (*cap. IV/vi*; p. 19).

5. It was at this point that LEIBNIZ intervened in the debate in defence of SCHELHAMMER, with his study *De ipsa natura...*, in September 1698, contending that every finite thing has received from God an intrinsic principle of activity. – See our bibliography under (BOYLE), SCHELHAMMER, STURM 1692 and STURM 1697, respectively, for further bibliographical details of these texts.

³As L. CARLIN (see bibliography) points out, LEIBNIZ, in an even earlier phase of his career, while studying at Altdorf university, repeatedly called God the '*mind* of the universe', "*Mens Universi*". In *Demonstrationum catholicarum conspectus* (1668–69), a project of a systematic treatise on Catholic doctrines, this concept of God presents itself in the context of a definition of beatific vision, as follows: "*c. 51. Visio beatifica seu intuitio DEI de facie in faciem est contemplatio universalis Harmoniae rerum quia DEUS seu Mens Universi nihil aliud est quam rer. Harmonia, seu principium pulchritudinis in ipsis.*" (AV, VI/1, p. 499) – In *De transsubstantiatione* (1668), then, a study about the reasonability of the Catholic doctrine of the transsubstantiation of the Eucharistic wine and bread, LEIBNIZ suggests that the universal mind that is God acts as the substantial form of the physical bodies bereaved of reason (i.e., of non-human bodies). This is possible insofar as the divine mind consists of the ideas of all things: "*Ita Substantia corporis humani est unio cum mente humana; Substantia corporum ratione carentium est unio cum mente universali seu Deo...*" (*ibid.*, p. 509; cf. also p. 511 on the divine mind as consisting of the ideas of all things).

February 1676) contain passages which suggest that LEIBNIZ, at this early stage, had not yet perceived a contradiction between the *aggregatum*-character (incomplete substantiality) of the physical world and the actual infinity (perfect substantiality) of God, though later he identified this contradiction as one of the major philosophical obstacles in the way of the *anima mundi*-theory.⁴ As he put it in *De arcanis sublimium*:

It seems that there is... some most perfect mind, or God. This mind, like a soul, exists as a whole in the whole body of the world; the existence of things is also due to this mind.⁵

While for the later LEIBNIZ, God is by definition the only real (non-imaginary) substance with which no body is correlated and which is alone above the ontological level of the *animae* and the *genii*, God is categorized here as a mind or spirit (*mens*) and likened to a soul (*anima*) which is in the whole body of the world.⁶ But LEIBNIZ's position was going to change soon, apparently even in the course of the very same year of 1676.

The sudden change of attitude is attested by *On the Origin of Things from the Forms (De origine rerum ex formis)*, written probably in April 1676. Here LEIBNIZ voices the argument that a hypothetical *anima mundi* cannot be an aggregate of individual souls. He does not treat other options, like, e.g., that of a world soul *not* composed of individual souls (PLATO's version in the *Timaios*), but his judgement is nonetheless a universal refusal of the world soul:

There is no soul of the world, because a continuum cannot be composed of minds, as it can be composed of spaces. You will say that a continuum can be composed of minds in a certain way, in so far as minds sense each other. I say in reply that a soul cannot be an entity by aggregation, but that universal space is an entity by aggregation. So it is not surprising that there is no soul of the universe.⁷

⁴On this early period of Leibnizian thought concerning the soul of the world, see section I: *The 'Anima Mundi' of the 'De Summa Rerum'*, of CARLIN's article. CARLIN's careful analysis, which concerns the concept of the world soul in LEIBNIZ's almost entire *oeuvre*, has been repeatedly challenged by Gregory BROWN (see BROWN 1998, 2000, 2005), and defended by Richard ARTHUR (see ARTHUR 1999 and 2001).

⁵“(Videtur) esse... quondam Mentem perfectissimam sive Deum. Hanc ut animam totam in toto esse corpore Mundi; huic menti etiam existentiam deberi rerum” (AV, series VI, vol. 2, p. 474; text № 60. Transl. by L. CARLIN, p. 2).

⁶In *De unione animae et corporis*, LEIBNIZ proposes the *anima mundi* theory more hypothetically, as he considers how the human soul moves nerve fluid in the cavities of the brain by generating vortices in it: “Porro in cerebri cavitatibus videtur omnis peragi gyratio, et anima tueri Vorticem suum. ... Sed animam ipsam agitare vorticem, hoc vero mirum est. Facit tamen, agimus enim non per simplicem machinam, sed ex illis reflexionibus, sive actionibus in nos ipsos. An forte ipse totus vortex magni (orbis) simili anima vivificatur, quae causa est, cur systematis leges observantur, et (compensentur) omnia. Totus Mundus unus Deo vortex” (*ibid.*, p. 480; text № 62).

⁷“Anima Mundi nulla est, quia non potest continuum quoddam componi ex mentibus, ut ex spatiis componi potest. Dices imo certo etiam modo, quatenus sese sentiunt. Respondeo et dico Animam non esse ens per aggregationem, Spatium autem univrsum esse Ens per aggregationem. Unde mirum non est nullam esse Animam universi.” (AV, series VI, vol. 3, p. 52; text 74. Transl. by L. CARLIN, p. 5, slightly modified by M. VASSÁNYI, in so far as *sese* seems to carry not a reflexive but a reciprocal meaning in this context. CARLIN translates “in so far as minds sense themselves”. Roman characters by M. VASSÁNYI).

From this time on, this negative judgment would preponderate in LEIBNIZ's several statements on account of the soul of the world. The next such statement, to be found in *De mundo praesenti* (1684–1686), repeats (or anticipates, the dating of both texts being uncertain) the disjunction formulated in *Deum non esse mundi animam* (see below in Section 4 of Chapter 3), and defines God as the *intelligentia extramundana*.⁸ Further mentions of the theory in the 17 February 1706 letter to DES BOSSES,⁹ and in the 1710 *Essays of Theodicy* (*Essais de Théodicée*, see *Discours de la conformité de la foi avec la raison*, §§ 8–9, and Part Two, § 195) essentially repeat the arguments of, respectively, the *Deum non esse mundi animam* and the *Considerations sur la doctrine d'un Esprit Universel Unique*. Next, LEIBNIZ's 1707 epistle to HANSCH (see the relevant passage in footnote under Section 5 of Chapter 3) briefly summarizes, but does not analyze philosophically, some of the several different classic and modern positions on the world soul, as they are presented in more detail in the *Considerations*. As we have said, LEIBNIZ's apparently last remarks concerning the world soul theory are found in his correspondence with CLARKE (epistle II/§ 12, IV/§ 33 and V/§§ 85–86), but they only serve to show the alleged absurdity of the Newtonian concept of God, and do not take the form of arguments against the world soul theory itself. LEIBNIZ's philosophy of God has now definitively been formed, and the concept of a soul of the world is only a logical instrument here, used in the *reductio ad absurdum* of CLARKE's and NEWTON's theory of the situational (real, i.e., non-eminent) presence of God in the physical universe.

The first text, then, that we are going to analyse in detail, a note put on a slip of paper and entitled *Deum non esse mundi animam*, is the earliest of the three we have chosen. It is the work of the 'young' LEIBNIZ, though it already represents his mature view on the question. This terse text is particularly interesting for the focus of our investigation, which is on the universal soul in the context of the relation of the finite with the infinite. Namely, LEIBNIZ demonstrates here by a philosophical analysis of the respective concepts of the finite and the infinite that God cannot be regarded as the soul of the world. The problematic possibility that there is nevertheless an *anima mundi* subordinate to God is not refuted, but left open (see Section 4 of Chapter 3).

⁸“*Corporum omnium Aggregatum dicitur Mundus, qui si infinitus est ne unum quidem Ens est non magis quam linea recta infinita aut numerus maximus. Itaque Deus non potest intelligi anima Mundi, non finiti, quia ipse Deus infinitus est, non infiniti quia corpus infinitum non potest unum Ens intelligi, quod autem non est unum per se id nec formam substantialem adeoque nec animam habet. Itaque recte Deus a Martiano Capella appellatur intelligentia extramundana*” (AV, series VI, vol. IV, p. 1509; text № 301).

⁹“*De essentia numeri, lineae et cujuscunque Totius est, esse terminatum. Hinc etsi magnitudine infinitus esset mundus, unum totum non esset, nec cum quibusdam veteribus fingi posset Deus velut anima mundi, non solum quia causa mundi est, sed etiam quia mundus talis unum corpus non foret, nec pro animali haberi posset, neque adeo nisi verbalem haberet unitatem. Est igitur loquendi compendium, cum unum dicimus, ubi plura sunt quam uno toto assignabili comprehendi possunt, et magnitudinis instar efferimus, quod proprietates ejus non habet*” (GERHARDT ed. 1965, vol. II, pp. 304–305).

In our second text (*De ipsa natura*), LEIBNIZ incidentally attacks, among other similar hypotheses, the natural philosophical conception of an all-pervading *anima Universi*, conceived to be responsible for all physical change (including movement) in all corporeal things, live and 'inanimate' alike. The universal soul is here implicitly considered as the omnipresent vivifying principle of the entire material world. Since, however, LEIBNIZ's opponent in this text, J. Ch. STURM, also accepts the thesis that there can not be such an agent, the manner in which a universal soul could mediate between God and nature is here left philosophically unspecified by LEIBNIZ. The hypothesis of the world soul or *anima Universi* is indirectly shown to be a philosophically unnecessary or even impossible supposition, as LEIBNIZ proves that each particular finite thing was vested by God, in the act of Creation, with an amount of permanent intrinsic energy or force (*ἐνέργεια, vis activa insita permanens*), in virtue of which they can carry out autonomously the programme inscribed in them by God. Hence, the internal dynamic nature of each finite thing is to be made responsible for the miraculously co-ordinated operation of nature as a whole (see Section 1 of Chapter 3):

As to the first question, on nature itself (if we may reflect on what it is not, as well as what it is), I certainly agree that there is no such thing as the soul of the universe. I also agree that those wonders which present themselves daily, and about which we customarily say (quite rightly) that the work of nature is the work of intelligence should not be ascribed to certain created intelligences endowed with wisdom and power only in proportion to the task at hand, but rather that the whole of nature is, so to speak, the workmanship of God, indeed, so much so, that any machine you may choose consists of a completely infinite number of organs (...), and therefore requires the infinite wisdom and power of the author and ruler.¹⁰

In our third text (*Considerations...*), the problem of the soul of the world (*ame du monde*) is discussed in a more complex approach in that the focus of the investigation is on the concept of universal *spirit* (*esprit*, Lat. *spiritus, mens*). The capital philosophical question for LEIBNIZ in this study is whether a 'universal spirit' (a concept interpreted by LEIBNIZ in several different manners) is equal to the totality of all individual human souls, *les ames particulieres*. If this is so, then there is only a single (numerically one) *Esprit Universel Unique* in the universe. This, however, will entail that individual human souls lose their ontological and moral independence. Compared to this dilemma, it is only a secondary question for LEIBNIZ here whether such a universal *spirit* can be identified with *God*, or with a universal *soul*. The chief doctrinal issue is not this problematic identification in this text, in

¹⁰“...*de ipsa natura, si dispiciamus, et quid non sit, et quid sit, assentior quidem, nullam dari animam Universi; concedo etiam, miranda illa, quae occurrunt quotidie, de quibus dicere merito solemus, opus naturae esse opus intelligentiae, non esse adscribenda creatis quibusdam Intelligentiis, sapientia et virtute proportionali ad rem tantam praeditis; sed naturam universam esse, ut sic dicam, artificium Dei, et tantum quidem, ut quaevis machina naturalis (...) organis constet prorsus infinitis, infinitamque adeo sapientiam potentiamque auctoris rectorisque postulet*” (*De ipsa natura...* point 2; GERHARDT, C. I., 1965, vol. 4, pp. 504–505. Transl. by R. ARIEW and D. GARBER, eds., p. 156. Underlining added; other highlighting by LEIBNIZ.)

which Leibniz's main interest goes to the question of the absolute unicity of spirit conceived as the substance and vivifying principle of every human soul.

LEIBNIZ relates this main issue, then, to the biological facet of his philosophy of soul, in particular, to the genesis of the individual souls by dint of pre-existent germs, *les semences animés*. He argues on natural philosophical, theological and psychological bases that a hypothetical universal spirit cannot be thought to be the inorganic totality of all human souls, whereas it could be conceived as God, the *Esprit Universel supreme*, or surprisingly, under certain conditions, even as an *ame du monde* subordinate to God! These demonstrations or statements are put forward in a natural theological setting, in relatively far-reaching concord with Christian (Scriptural) theology (see Section 5 of Chapter 3).

After this formal presentation of the three relevant texts, we elaborate under Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 of Chapter 3 on LEIBNIZ's natural philosophy and his philosophy of soul, as well as on his particular arguments against (or on his toleration of) the introduction of the concept of the universal soul into philosophy. In our discussion, we are going to follow not a chronological but a logical scheme that will allow us to go from the general toward the particular. We shall also utilize several more of LEIBNIZ's natural philosophical texts in our analysis. First, however, should come a general presentation of how LEIBNIZ's followers reacted on the problematic concept of *anima mundi*.

2 Wolff: Theologia naturalis, Pars prima (1736)

It is striking to see how radically differently the great disciple, Christian WOLFF (1679–1754), approaches the problem of the world soul from the very *Problemstellung* itself, which is offered by him in § 159 in Part I, 1 of his *Natural Theology Expounded in a Scientific Manner (Theologia naturalis methodo scientifica pertractata, 1736; the Cosmologia generalis and the Vernünfftige Gedancken über die Würckungen der Natur* leave the question of the world soul untouched).¹¹ What WOLFF painstakingly refutes here (as will be presented in our Section 6 of Chapter 3) is the identification of God with an *anima mundi* that is linked to the physical universe in the same manner as a human soul is linked to a physical body (i.e., in the manner of a *commercium animae cum corpore*). By contrast, LEIBNIZ, as we have seen in outline, argues against the existence of the universal soul by showing that it is philosophically superfluous to suppose this (*De ipsa natura...*); while in the *Deum non esse animam mundi*, and in the *Considerations...*, he tolerates a certain interpretation of the concept of *ame du monde*, on condition that it is not conceived as the totality of all individual human souls.

Now WOLFF has, as it were, a double-decker philosophical scheme to disprove the idea that God is the soul of the world: on the one hand, he has a general natural

¹¹In the edition of WOLFF's *Gesammelte Werke* by ÉCOLE et al., the *Theologia naturalis* comprises voll. 7.1–7.3; i.e., roughly 1,800 pages.

theological argument, which shows that God is a simple immaterial substance while, on the other hand, he has also a particular argument exploiting the divine attribute of distinct representations, which are not possible through the sense organs of a body. By both the general and the special argument, it is excluded that God is the soul of the world, though WOLFF draws this conclusion explicitly only from the special argument, which we discuss in detail under Section 6 of Chapter 3.

Before we survey the structure of the general argument (implicitly directed against the identification of God with an *anima mundi*), we have to remind ourselves that in Leibnizian-Wolffian metaphysics, a *body* is a *composite substance*, which consists of a substantial form analogous to soul, and of totally passive *materia nuda* (cf. LEIBNIZ's letter to BIERLING, 12 August 1711). Simple substances, i.e., God, minds, souls and 'lives' are all immaterial, but all *created* simple substances have a corresponding body, which they can never lose. Hence, it is God's ontological difference that He is the unique *substantia simplex* or monad that does not have a corresponding body: He is not only *immaterial*, but also *incorporeal*.

Therefore, the thesis of the incorporeality of God follows from that of God's *simplicity* as from its conceptual and logical ground. The simplicity of God, then, is ultimately derived from God's aseity (*aseitas*), i.e., from the attribute that God receives His existence from Himself, *a se*, and not from any other being. As WOLFF says in § 83 of Part I, 1 of his *Theologia naturalis*:

God is a simple being, and (therefore) can not be corporeal. For God is a being by itself (§ 67). But a being by itself is a simple being (§ 49). Hence, God too is a simple being. Further, a being by itself can not be made up of parts (§ 47), so God can not be made up of parts either. Wherefore – since every body is made up of parts (§ 119 Cosmol.) – God can not be a corporeal being.¹²

God's aseity, in turn, flows from God's being the *ens necessarium*, a concept that is explained by WOLFF (in concord with the Leibnizian cosmological argument) as '*the sufficient reason of the existence of this visible world and of our souls*' (*ratio sufficiens existentiae mundi hujus adspectabilis & animarum nostrarum*, § 67). God as *ratio sufficiens*, *raison suffisante* of the individual human souls, and of the whole physical universe is the being who, for LEIBNIZ, must be posited in a logically necessary manner to exist *outside* the concatenation of actual, finite things, in order to eschew an infinite regress of efficient causes when we seek the answer to the metaphysical question, "*Why is there something rather than nothing?*" ("*Pourquoy il y a plustôt quelque chose que rien?*")¹³ God, the ontological ground of contingent

¹²"*Deus est ens simplex, & corporeus esse nequit. Etenim Deus est ens a se (§ 67). Ens vero a se simplex est (§ 49). Ergo & Deus ens simplex est. Porro ens a se compositum esse nequit (§ 47), adeoque nec Deus compositus esse potest. Quamobrem cum corpus omne sit ens compositum (§ 119 Cosmol.); Deus quoque corporeus esse nequit*" (ÉCOLE et al., eds., II. Abt., vol. 7.1, p. 63. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI).

¹³Cf. LEIBNIZ: *Principes de la nature et de la grace, fondés en raison*, Point 7 (appr. 1712–1714; GERHARDT, C. I., 1965, vol. VI, p. 602). See also LEIBNIZ's *De rerum originatione radicali* (1697).

substances, will thus be conceived by the entire Leibnizian-Wolffian school as an *ens extramundanum*, and, consequently, also as an incorporeal being. God is hence incorporeal ultimately because He is the necessary ground of existence for all finite (i.e., corporeal) contingent things.

The necessary being, conceived as the sufficient reason of the *concatenatio actualium finitorum* is like the cornerstone of the entire Wolffian building of rational theology, which demonstrates the existence of such a being from the empirical fact that individual human souls exist (cf. § 24). Since, then, it is of demonstrated rational evidence that there is an *ens necessarium*, the conclusion has to be drawn, along the inferential line *necessarium – a se – simplex – non corporeum*, that it is impossible that God is corporeal. Therefore, He cannot be the soul of the world either. This is the implicit conclusion of what we have called WOLFF's general argument against the world soul theory.

It is important to notice that the denial of God's corporeality virtually excludes the Incarnation of the Redeemer: there is a degree of tension or discrepancy between *theologia revelata* and *theologia naturalis* around the person of Christ, also because redemption is not considered to be an operation of God within the bounds of rational theology.¹⁴ Since, however, the theory of God's identification with the world soul has fundamental *natural* (rational) theological relevance, the systematic WOLFF will take utmost care to disprove this identification. Section 6 of Chapter 3 will investigate what may be called his specific argument against the world soul theory.

3 *Baumgarten: Metaphysica* (1739)

Alexander Gottlieb BAUMGARTEN'S (1714–1762) *Metaphysica* (1739)¹⁵ shuns the explicit philosophical treatment of our topic; it makes only one or two remarks that can indirectly be applied to the problem of the world soul. § 855

¹⁴For WOLFF, the three chief operations of God in respect of the universe are creation, preservation and causality of change (i.e. through the active forces of finite individual substances, God is the ultimate efficient cause of all events that happen in the world). Hence, incarnation and redemption are not discussed in the frame of Wolffian natural theology.

To see the complexity of the relation between natural and supernatural theology, cf. also §§ 18–19 of *Theologia naturalis*, I/1 (*Theologiae naturalis prolegomena*), where WOLFF affirms that “*Theologia naturalis inservit divinitati S. S. evincendae*” and “*ad Theologiam revelatam nos manuducit*”; and the fact that he systematically underpins his theses of natural theology by references to Scripture.

BAUMGARTEN'S *Metaphysica* does not make any reference to the person or the act of the Saviour, either.

¹⁵1739 was the year of the first edition. KANT used and annotated the fourth edition (1757) of this book (cf. AK XVII), which is fully identical with the seventh edition (1779) we used (cf. bibliography, BAUMGARTEN).

(on *spinozismus theologicus*) and § 388 specify that the world is neither an attribute, nor a modus of God:

§ 388. The world is neither the infinite substance... nor an internal determination of the infinite substance. Hence, it is neither the essence, nor an attribute, nor a mode or a modification of the infinite being... Hence, all worlds must be posited outside the infinite substance, and consequently, even our world exists outside the infinite being, which, by this reason, is called the extramundane being,¹⁶ a being outside the existing world.¹⁷

This implies, among other things, that the physical world is not God's body, so God is not the soul of the world. The natural theological premiss of this thesis derives from the cosmological observation that any kind of world is a concatenation of actual, finite things: "*mundus est... series... actualium finitorum*" (§ 354). But finite things are intrinsically liable to change, so they can not be necessary entities. Therefore, they must be contingent: "*ens finitum est interne mutabile..., hinc non est ens necessarium..., & (est) ipsum ens contingens...*" (§ 254; cf. also § 134). Hence, any kind of world as a harmonious system of finite things is contingent in respect of its existence: "*omnis mundus est ens contingens*" (§ 361). Since, however, an infinite progress of finite causes of existence would still build a contingent chain, it is reasonable and necessary to conclude that this chain as a whole has an efficient cause outside itself. This is essentially the reconstruction of the Leibnizian cosmological argument for the existence of God considered as the *ultima ratio rerum*. As § 334 of the *Metaphysica* puts it:

§ 334. Every contingent and finite being is one that exists by virtue of another being... Therefore, the existence of such an existing thing does not inhere in it by virtue of its own particular force... Hence, a foreign force, placed outside the finite and contingent reality, is the sufficient reason of the existence inherent in the finite and contingent, real being... Therefore, a substance placed outside the finite and contingent being exercises an influence on it, giving it existence... Hence, every contingent and finite real being is but an effect... and has an efficient cause...¹⁸

In other words, God, the efficient cause of existence of the concatenation of all finite things is a being beyond the world, an *ens extramundanum*; this is God's essential ontological difference. But if God is beyond or outside the world, being conceived as the cause of the world's existence, then His presence *within* the world will appear problematic. In Chapter 2, we are going to expound BAUMGARTEN's solution to this problem.

¹⁶"*das Wesen ausser der Welt*" (BAUMGARTEN's note).

¹⁷"§ 388. *Mundus nec est substantia infinita, ... nec determinatio eius interna... hinc nec essentia entis infiniti... nec attributum, nec modus... nec modificatio... Hinc omnis mundus extra substantiam infinitam ponendus est, adeoque hic etiam mundus existit extra ens infinitum, quod ideo vocatur ens extramundanum, ens extra hunc mundum actuale*" (BAUMGARTEN, p. 348. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI).

¹⁸"§ 334. *Omne ens contingens & finitum est ens ab alio... Ergo existenti existentia non inhaeret per vim ipsi propriam... hinc vis aliena extra finitum & contingens reale posita est ratio sufficiens inhaerentis enti finitae & contingenti reali existentiae... Ergo substantia extra ipsum posita in illud agit existentiam influendo... Hinc omne ens contingens & finitum reale est effectus... & habet causam efficientem...*" (*ibid.*, p. 102. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI).

4 *Ploucquet: De hylozoismo veterum et recentiorum* (1775)

First a disciple of the founding master,¹⁹ then an apostate of the school, Tübingen professor Gottfried PLOUCQUET held a disputation on his terse text entitled, *On ancient and modern hylozoism (De hylozoismo veterum et recentiorum...)*, in August 1775, before a body of six respondents, which may have included one of the relatives of the then 73-year-old Friedrich Christoph ÖTINGER.²⁰ As a matter of historical fact, we find even the young SCHELLING among later readers of the *disputatio*.²¹ PLOUCQUET had been teaching logic and metaphysics at the *Tübinger Stift* for quite a long time, but he retired in 1782, i.e., before the young SCHELLING arrived there, though his reputation must have remained very strong there for a long period.

As its title anticipates, his little book, which survives only in five or six copies in some German libraries, offers a systematic study of ancient and modern representatives of the theory of *hylozoism*, which he defines in the following terms: “*Hylozoism is the opinion of those who think that life is inherent in matter...*” (“*Hylozoismus vocatur sententia eorum, qui materiae vitam inesse statuunt...*”).²² He dedicates the most substantial, middle part of the text to a detailed criticism of LEIBNIZ’s and ROBINET’s respective positions, which he regarded hylozoistical. It is in the introductory §§ I–XXXIX that PLOUCQUET presents and refutes ancient source material regarding the *anima mundana*, the world soul, while he ends off the book with a concise formulation of his own version of vitalism (last two pages, §§ CXIX–CXXIX), of which a summarizing statement is given in the closing § CXXIX.²³

In his *diaireis* of hylozoistic theories, he considers five versions that apply the concept of an *anima mundi*, but describes three more hylozoistic theories as well that suppose not a unicity, but a plurality of souls present in the material world. As regards the *anima mundi* theories, says PLOUCQUET, if there is one single soul operating in the universe, then it is either infinite (identification with God) or finite (§ III). If it is

¹⁹PLOUCQUET occupies a Leibnizian-Wolffian position in metaphysics in his early (1753) systematic treatise *Principia de substantiis et phaenomenis* (see bibliography under PLOUCQUET 1753 for further details). This claim is evidenced by his concept of substance as an active and manifestative entity (*cap.* II), by his conception of the commerce between body and mind (*cap.* XVIII), by his proof of the immortality of soul (*cap.* XIX) etc.

²⁰For the full title of PLOUCQUET’s *disputatio*, see bibliography under PLOUCQUET 1775. The name “*Joannes Fridericus Oetinger, Vinsbergensis*” (i.e., “from Weinberg”) figures, among five others, on the title page of the booklet, under the heading “*Publice disputabunt*”. ÖTINGER is associated with the village of Weinberg where he worked as a pastor for a certain time. We leave open the question of the identity of this respondent, until further research can be done.

²¹We learn from a letter addressed to his parents (4 September 1797, AA III 1, p. 137; not included in FUHRMANS, ed.) that SCHELLING knew of, and had an interest in *De hylozoismo* precisely when he was collecting material for his *Von der Weltseele*.

²²§ I of *De hylozoismo*.

²³PLOUCQUET: *De hylozoismo*, p. 48.

infinite, it is either linked to the world by necessity, or freely influences it (§§ VI–VII). If it is finite, then it is either subordinate to God or not (§ III); and, finally, if it is subordinate to God, then it is either part of what it animates (“*pars animati*”), or it is the efficient cause of all live beings and of all substantial forms (“*Causa efficiens omnium vivorum omniumque formarum*”; § XVII). PLOUCQUET then refutes these options one by one.

Though this text is more of a general metaphysical than of a rational theological tendency, the discussion of the concept of God plays a central normative role in it. At the very beginning (§ IV), PLOUCQUET specifies two attributes of whatever soul is: 1) substantial deficiency (soul is an *ens incompletum*, not a subject in itself without a particular body that it informs – an originally Leibnizian conviction);²⁴ and, 2) mutual affectability with an organic body (the soul affects its body and is affected by it, § IV – a Wolffian conception). The still incomplete definition of the soul resulting from these premisses already precludes the identification of God with the world soul: God, the most perfect being, cannot be an incomplete substance. In the traditional manner of the Leibnizian school, then, PLOUCQUET represents God not as the world soul but as infinite force (*vis infinita*). Yet, before we show in detail how this is done (cf. Section 8 of Chapter 3), we have to review the philosophical difficulties the master and his followers raised in the way of the multifaceted concept of the world soul.

²⁴Whatever is in ontological terms an *ens incompletum*, is in terms of substantiality a *substantia incompleta*: it is not a *subiectum* and cannot bear accidental qualities. Therefore, PLOUCQUET seems to contradict himself when he calls the hypothetical universal soul a *substantia* in § XVII: “*Cum fingitur substantia omnes mundi partes animans...*”

Chapter 3

The Distinctive Philosophical Content of the Concept of an “*anima mundi*” in LEIBNIZ and His Followers. Arguments of This School Against the General Theory of *anima mundi*. A Broader Natural Philosophical and Metaphysical Discussion of Their Answer Positions

1 *Leibnizian Natural Philosophy in General: De ipsa natura... (1698). LEIBNIZ'S Position in Relation to that of MALEBRANCHE (De la recherche de la vérité, 1674–75 & Traité de la nature et de la grace, 1680) and J. Ch. STURM (Idolum naturae..., 1692), Respectively. STURM'S Opinion Concerning the anima mundi*

As we have mentioned, then, the main argument against the world soul in LEIBNIZ'S *De ipsa natura* is that it is superfluous, *praeter necessitatem*, to posit it: a carefully formulated natural philosophical theory can, suggests LEIBNIZ, supply us with a more reasonable explanation of how the natural world is governed by God than the hypothesis of the world soul. Therefore, the main drift of this text is to show (on the ground of the implicit logical principle *entia praeter necessitatem non sunt multiplicanda*) that a qualified monotheism is a methodologically simpler solution for thinking the divine direction of the world, so no direct argument against the *anima universi* is necessary.

To show on what philosophical ground LEIBNIZ can put this forward, we shall adumbrate his general position in natural philosophy. This natural philosophy is based on an ontological fundament, which safeguards the relative independence of the finite created monads. The created monads do not merge, in terms of substance, in the infinite primary monad, their first cause and permanent maintainer. The ontological independence of the finite created monads is *relative* in that they continuously depend on God for their existence, permanence and efficacy.¹

¹The thesis of the continuous dependence of the finite monads on God for their existence may be termed the thesis of continuous creation. As W. SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN points out with reference to §§ 7–9 of the *Théodicée*, “*Der Übergang von der Möglichkeit zur kontingenten Existenz kann als dauernde Schöpfung (continua creatio) interpretiert werden...*” (SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN, 2001, p. 1075).

For a determination of the manner in which the efficacy of the finite monads depends on God, we have to cross over into the domain of natural philosophy. LEIBNIZ's position here is that the finite monads have been vested with inherent active forces (*quaedam vis activa et permanens rebus indita*) by the infinite substance at the act of creation. For LEIBNIZ, as we shall see in more detail under Section 3, the presence of the active forces in the created monads means that every compound, i.e., corporeal substance, is possessed with a kind of 'life' (*vitale aliquid est in omni parte materiae*).² More importantly, God has, in advance, so coordinated the activities of the finite monads that they harmoniously cooperate with each other without exerting real transitive influence on each other. The action of a particular monad is simultaneous with the corresponding passion of another monad, but since the action of the one is not the efficient cause of the passion of the other, the cooperation between the two substances is not real but *ideal*. As LEIBNIZ puts it in point 10 of *De ipsa natura*:

In another place I shall give a better account of what can be said about the transeunt actions of created things. Indeed, elsewhere I have already explained a part of it,³ namely, that the interaction between substances or monads arises not from an influx but through an agreement derived from divine preformation, accomodating each thing to things outside of itself while each follows the inherent force and laws of its nature; in this also consists the union of the soul and the body.⁴

Hence, the operations of nature run their course *not* through physical influx (*influxus physicus*) between the involved substances, in which case there would be a *real* commerce of substances (*commercium physicum reale*). In the natural world, effects correspond to causes in a universal harmony *ideally* only, according to the principle of sympathy (*commercium ideale et sympatheticum*), by virtue of a previous divine determination and coordination. BAUMGARTEN, who occupies a Leibnizian position in metaphysics and natural philosophy, qualifies this system as "*universal pre-established harmony combined with the succour of the infinite substance*" ("*harmonia praestabilita universalis coniuncta cum concursu infinitae substantiae*").⁵ KANT will argue, however, that the weak point of LEIBNIZ's idea is that a general *law* of the divine

²*De ipsa natura*, point (12); GERHARDT, C. I., 1965, vol. IV, p. 512 (no literal citation). On the inherent spontaneity of the monads, cf. W. Schmidt-Biggemann: "*Die Monade ist ganz durch Spontaneität bestimmt, d.h. sie handelt aus sich selbst, nicht zufällig, sondern gemäss dem ihr wesenhaften Prinzip: Ihre Einheit wird als Kraftquelle aller ihren Handlungen begriffen und ihre Handlungen als ihre Eigenschaften.*" (SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN, 2001, p. 1071.)

³In the *Systeme nouveau de la Nature et de la communication des substances, aussi bien que de l'union qu'il y a entre l'Ame et le Corps* (1695; GERHARDT ed., 1965, vol. IV, pp. 477–487).

⁴"*Quid vero de transeuntibus creaturarum actionibus sit statuendum, alio loco melius exponetur, pro parte etiam, jam tum a nobis alibi est explicatum: commercium scilicet substantiarum sive monadum oriri non per influxum, sed per consensum ortum a divina praeformatione, unoquoque, dum suae naturae vim insitam legesque sequitur, ad extranea accomodato, in quo etiam unio animae corporisque consistit.*" (GERHARDT ed., 1965, vol. IV, p. 510. Transl. by R. ARIEW and D. GARBER, eds., p. 161. Highlighting by LEIBNIZ himself.)

⁵BAUMGARTEN: *Metaphysica*, § 462.

coordination is missing, so it has had to be *individual* concerning each particular future event of nature which God has foreseen (i.e., the cooperation of the natural substances has had to be a *harmonia singulariter stabilita*).⁶

The specificity of the Leibnizian theory, in contrast to that of MALEBRANCHE and STURM (LEIBNIZ's immediate opponent in *De ipsa natura*), respectively, is that it attributes a less immediate influence to the First Cause in the actual operations of nature than MALEBRANCHE does, and a higher degree of self-sufficiency to the functioning of nature than STURM does, without diminishing God's infinite power. In this respect, Leibnizian natural philosophy may be said to derive essentially from an original interpretation of the concept of divine perfection. For in MALEBRANCHE's eyes, God is the *real* and *immediate* efficient cause (*causa productrix*), which acts in every actually occurring event of nature (change or motion), while an individual soul's decision to act, or any natural presage that heralds a change is only a *cause occasionnelle* (*cause seconde/particulière/naturelle*) for God effectively to intervene. As far as events of nature are concerned, MALEBRANCHE argues from the inertia of natural bodies that they cannot be the cause of their own motions:

It is evident that no big or small body has any force to move itself... But when we consider the idea of God, i.e., of the infinitely perfect being, who is, consequently, omnipotent, we understand that there is such a connection between His will and the motion of every body that it is impossible to conceive that He should want that a body be moved, and that this particular body should not be moved. ... Hence, the moving force of bodies resides not in the bodies that are themselves in motion; this moving force is nothing but the divine will. ... Nevertheless, a ball is the natural cause of the motion it conveys. Consequently, however, a natural cause is not a real, genuine cause; it is only an occasional cause, one that determines the Author of Nature to act in such and such a manner upon such and such particular occasion.⁷

⁶The Kantian criticism of LEIBNIZ's natural philosophy is articulated along the concept of God as a precondition of the organic unity of the world, or as a condition of the compossibility of the finite substances constituting the world (see on this M. MOORS's dissertation, *Deel I*, pp. 44–49, who denotes this aspect of the concept of God with the expression “*compossibiliteitsvoorwaarde*”; p. 49). KANT formulated his NEWTON-based criticism of the Leibnizian concept of the world in the *Nova dilucidatio* (*Propositio XIII, Demonstratio, and Usus 6*; 1755), in the dissertation *De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis* (§§ 16–22; 1770), in many of his *Reflexionen* (e.g. 4215–17, 5415–20) from the eighties, as well as in his *Vorlesungen über die Metaphysik* (chapter “*Vom commercio der Substanzen*”; before 1788).

⁷*Il est évident que tous les corps grands et petits n'ont point la force de se remuer... Mais lorsqu'on pense à l'idée de Dieu; c'est-à-dire d'un être infiniment parfait et par conséquent tout-puissant, on connaît qu'il y a une telle liaison entre sa volonté et le mouvement de tous les corps, qu'ils est impossible de concevoir qu'il veuille qu'un corps soit mû et que ce corps ne le soit pas. ... La force mouvante des corps n'est donc point dans les corps qui se remuent, puisque cette force mouvante n'est autre chose que la volonté de Dieu. ... Cependant une boule est cause naturelle du mouvement qu'elle communique. Une cause naturelle n'est donc point une cause réelle et véritable, mais seulement une cause occasionnelle, et qui détermine l'auteur de la nature à agir de telle et telle manière en telle et telle rencontre.” (MALEBRANCHE: *De la recherche de la vérité*, 1674–75, Livre VI, 2^e partie, ch. III: “*De l'erreur la plus dangereuse de la philosophie des Anciens*”; ŒC, vol. 2, pp. 200–201. Transl. by M. Vassányi; highlighting by the translator.) Cf. also “*XV^e Éclaircissement: Sur le chapitre le troisième de la seconde partie du sixième Livre. Touchant l'efficace attribuée aux causes secondes.*”*

In other words, the will of God acts and produces an effect whenever in an event of nature a secondary cause proffers an occasion for Him to operate, determining the infinite power of God to produce the effect a natural body cannot produce by itself because of its inertia. Physical interaction between corporeal substances depends, at every moment, on the regular application of the volition of God as primary efficient cause. Hence, the commerce between finite substances is, to a great extent, *mediated*.

The divine will operates, however, according to a *general* and not particular rule (“*Dieu n’agit point par des volontéz particulières...*”).⁸ It follows from the perfect wisdom and pervasive rationality of God, argues MALEBRANCHE, that He necessarily applies such methods in the implementation of His plans as produce the greatest effect by the simplest cause. As God aims, first and foremost, at *order* in both the reign of nature and in that of grace, He necessarily establishes the simplest possible general laws, which in turn will not be activated unless and until the particular causes determine them.⁹

Regular divine mediation is the determining principle of MALEBRANCHE’S theory of sense perception also, according to which the human soul, being of an ontologically higher order than simple bodies, cannot receive any impression from them. Instead, the soul receives its ideas of sensible things from the intelligible substance of God the Son, the *Logos* or *ratio universalis*, which holds the eternal productive ideas or essences of all finite things, the *mundus intelligibilis*, in itself. Thus, the process of sense perception (so *a fortiori*, also that of intellection) presupposes a cognitive *union* of the individual mind (*esprit*) with the Redemptor God, in which Christ is intimately and actively present in the soul (“*présence intime de celui qui comprend toutes choses dans la simplicité de son être*”).¹⁰ *Vice versa*, the individual mind participates in eternal truth as it is stored away in infinite reason (“*...tous les hommes participent à la même Raison...*”).¹¹ The necessary and unchangeable ideas of all material and intelligible things alike are perceived by

⁸*Traité de la nature et de la grace* (1680), *Premier discours* (“*De la nécessité des lois générales de la Nature et de la Grace*”), thesis XIX (ŒC, vol. 5, p. 188).

⁹Cf. “*Car ces sortes de causes (scil. les causes occasionnelles) ont toujours & tres-promptement leur effet, & sans elles l’effet ne se produit jamais. Par exemple, le choc des corps étant la cause occasionnelle du changement qui arrive dans leur mouvement, si deux corps ne se rencontrent point, leurs mouvemens ne changent point, & s’ils changent, on peut s’assurer que les corps se sont rencontrés.*” in *Traité de la nature et de la grace, Deuxième Discours* (“*Des Loix de la Grace en particulier, & des Causes occasionnelles qui les réglent & qui en déterminent l’efficacité*”), thesis VI; ŒC, vol. 5, pp. 211–212.

¹⁰*De la recherche de la vérité*, Livre III, 2^e partie, ch. VI: “*Que nous voyons toutes choses en Dieu*” (ŒC, vol. 1, p. 254).

¹¹*Traité de la nature et de la grace, Troisième Discours* (“*De la Grace. De la manière dont elle agit en nous*”), thesis XIV; ŒC, vol. 5, p. 250.

finite intellects through the efficient causality of infinite reason operating within our minds:

*Nothing can act in the mind immediately except what is superior to it; nothing can do this except for God only; because it is only the author of our existence who is able to change its modes. It is therefore necessary that all our ideas be in the efficient substance of the Divinity, who is intelligible or able to enlighten us only because He is the only one who can affect the intellects.*¹²

*Moreover, it must be admitted that God is very closely united to our souls by His presence, so one may say that He is the 'place' of minds, just like space is, in a specific sense, the place of bodies.*¹³

As a consequence, the soul, thus conceived, is mystically nestled against God, in a condition of metaphysical destitution of almost all autonomous initiatives,¹⁴ although by pure grace it still keeps a limited capacity of choosing the real good.¹⁵

Hence, we may assert that the Malebranchian model of the operation of nature (as well as of the soul) dialectically exploits the concept of God as the perfectly rational being and as the only real agent. In MALEBRANCHE's comprehensive conception, it is seen as deriving from the perfectly rational character of God that in both the world of nature and that of grace, the events are subsumed under general laws; and that the world of nature is subservient to the world of grace. At the same time, it is seen as perfectly irrational to suppose that a power other than the greatest (i.e., infinite) one could be the efficient cause of the events taking place in the kingdom of nature and

¹²"Or rien ne peut agir immédiatement dans l'esprit, s'il ne lui est supérieur, rien ne le peut que Dieu seul; car il n'y a que l'auteur de notre être qui en puisse changer les modifications. Donc il est nécessaire que toutes nos idées se trouvent dans la substance efficace de la Divinité, qui seule n'est intelligible ou capable de nous éclairer que parce qu'elle seule peut affecter les intelligences." (*De la recherche de la vérité*, Livre III, 2^e partie, Chapter VI: "Que nous voyons toutes choses en Dieu." ŒC, vol. 1, p. 251. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

¹³"Il faut de plus savoir que Dieu est très étroitement uni à nos âmes par sa présence, de sorte qu'on peut dire qu'il est le lieu des esprits, de même que les espaces sont en un sens le lieu des corps." (*ibid.*; p. 248. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

¹⁴This is exactly the stance LEIBNIZ does not accept. As W. SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN says, "Er (Leibniz) lehnt vielmehr die Theorie ab, die für jeden Akt der Kommunikation zwischen Körper und Seele, also für jeden Erkenntnis- und Willensakt ein Eingreifen Gottes, einen Deus ex machina postuliert... Der Begriff der prästabilierten Harmonie soll erklären, wie individuelle Substanzen, die nicht interagieren, aufeinander abgestimmt sind." (SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN, 2001, p. 1075.)

¹⁵Our moral weakness, i.e., tendency to sin, says MALEBRANCHE, is a consequence of the Fall, whereby man, in the primordial person of Adam, yielded to his senses, and became unable to follow the directions of his intellect. Therefore, the tentation of the pleasure of the flesh had to be counterbalanced, in the divine scheme of salvation, by the *délectation prévenante* of divine grace, the meritorious cause of which is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ alone. The individual soul has thus *gratuitously* been brought back into a condition in which it can freely choose its real good, God, while in this condition, it still conserves a degree of responsibility for its ultimate salvation. See *Traité de la nature et de la grace*, esp. *Troisième Discours* ("De la Grace. De la manière dont elle agit en nous"), thesis XXIII; ŒC, vol. 5, p. 256.

in that of grace, as this could imply a reversal in the ontological order of things. The nature of reason is order¹⁶; and if God is Reason, then the order of the world follows from God's nature. Yet, while Malebranchian metaphysics and the natural philosophy built thereupon is a coherent elaboration of the concept of perfect and universal divine rationality, it might be thought to unnecessarily reduce the role finite entities can play in the operations of nature. As BAUMGARTEN remarks critically in § 452 of his *Metaphysica*, “*this system removes all force and energy from the finite things*” (“*hoc systema omnem in finitis tollit vim & energiam*”).¹⁷

Now STURM, on the other hand, puts a greater *chronological* distance between the First Cause (*causa prima/originalis*) and its effects, the operations of nature, but he establishes a similar *logical* relationship between them to the one MALEBRANCHE institutes. This professor of mathematics and physics at Altdorf University, the institution from which LEIBNIZ received his doctoral degree, argues in his *Idol of Nature* (*Idolum naturae Similiumque Nominum vanorum, Ex hominum Christianorum animis deturbandi conatus philosophicus...*, 1692), in favour of the thesis of the distinguished English natural scientist and philosopher Robert BOYLE who, in an apologetical effort to defend the Christian concept of God, dissuaded the natural scientific usage of the term ‘nature’ whenever it was meant to denote some natural power distinct from the power of God.¹⁸ In an elegant Latin discourse, STURM first lists the several acceptations the word ‘nature’ is used in (*caput* I), then gives a detailed account of the ancient and modern natural philosophical hypotheses on nature conceived as a generative and regulative power distinct from God (*caput* II), to state his own position on the question in *capita* III–IV, most incisively in the latter. His main point is that in *everyday* language, the use of the questionable term (“*natura*”) in the indicated meaning is admissible, so long as we are conscious that we are talking in a metaphorical sense. However, as soon as we want to express ourselves with scientific rigour, talking “*proprie*”, we should never insinuate that ‘nature’ as such really carries out anything on its own, by its own force, etc.

STURM's argument, again, departs from a consistent, analytical interpretation of the concept of the omnipotency of God: if God *is* omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, infinitely good and infinitely wise, then it seems illogical to say that any other agent really distinct from God should act, even by a delegation of power from God, as efficient cause and regulative principle of natural change. In that case, God would only contribute (*concurrere*) to the efficacy of a more proximate cause (‘nature’ as such), and this would not be in proportion to the infinity of His power,

¹⁶Cf. “...*c'est le même Dieu qui est l'Auteur de l'ordre de la grace & de celui de la Nature...*” in *Traité de la nature et de la grace, Premier Discours*, thesis XXXVII; ŒC, vol. 5, p. 195.

¹⁷Section II (§§ 446–48: “*Substantiarum mundanarum commercium*”) of the cosmological part of BAUMGARTEN's *Metaphysica* is a comprehensive summary and comparison of the three natural philosophical systems he considered of major importance: (1) *harmonia praestabilita universalis*, (2) *influxus physicus universalis* and (3) *systema caussarum occasionalium universale*. MALEBRANCHE's standpoint is described in detail in §§ 452–453.

¹⁸On the historical and philological details of this debate, see the first footnote of Section 1 of Chapter 2, and our bibliography under the respective names of the involved philosophers.

and would not express it adequately. Hence, by virtue of a coherent analysis of the concept of divine omnipotence, we seem entitled to draw the natural philosophical conclusion that God is not simply the *primary* but also the *unique* efficient cause responsible for all natural change in the entire universe, ever since Creation. The introduction of really cooperating secondary causes between the First Cause and nature would mean a diminution of divine power and glory, insists STURM. Therefore, secondary causes operate blindly and mechanically in the workings of nature; in fact, the whole of nature is but a machine or instrument, which God had to put into operation only once (*semel*), at the event of Creation:

According to our hypothesis, the issue at stake is clear, in so far as... we have concluded that what we commonly affirm to be performed by Nature with the succour of God, is (in reality) performed by God Himself alone with His own powers (though) in Nature and by the instrumentality of Nature; because whatever efficiency we encounter in any part of Nature is certainly nothing but the sole efficiency of the divine will itself, which extends itself irresistibly to all places and times. With this efficiency, God decreed once and for all that some matter should exist, and that this matter, after having been divided up into parts, should be moved in obedience to a law which prescribes that whenever one part, moved... by virtue of the efficiency of His will, meets another; this other part should also be moved exclusively by that efficiency of His will...¹⁹

Thus, God's forces (*vires*) are the *omnipraesens causa vere efficiens* of all operations of nature, while nature is only an *instrumentum*, inert in itself, of the divine willpower. God, in the act of Creation, at once determined nature to operate forever in a chain reaction like clockwork, *horologium aliquod*, which is put into operation by virtue of a single first impulse.²⁰ KANT, however, probably would not recognize

¹⁹*"In nostra vero hypothesisi res est evidentissima, qua... statuimus, ea quae Naturam operari, DEO concurrente, vulgo dicimus, DEUM ipsum solum, suisque solius viribus, in ipsa & per ipsam... operari; quia, quamcumque... efficaciam in his aut istis Naturae partibus... obviam habeamus, eam nihil aliud esse certum est, quam ipsissimam illam, solum & unicum voluntatis divinae, in omnia loca & tempora sese potentissime exporrigentem, efficaciam, qua semel voluit, ut materia aliqua existeret, & in partes divisa ea lege moveretur, ut (...) quoties una alteri occurreret, ea scilicet voluntatis suae efficacia mota..., illa altera pariter, sola iterum illius suae voluntatis efficacia... moveretur &c."* (STURM: *Idolum naturae...*, caput IV, xiv; pp. 39–40. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting added.)

²⁰In the 1698 *Exercitatio philosophica de natura sibi incassum vindicata*, STURM lays less stress on the 'clockwork'-character of the operation of nature, but he essentially maintains his original position that the Creator delegates no power to secondary causes, and that the divine power brings about all natural change immediately, though by a general arrangement rather than by particular interventions; cf. *"Et hoc est illud, quod ubique inculcamos ubi DEUM immediate movere dicimus, non eo sensu, quasi immediate ante effectum actu secutorum omnipotens suum jussum repetere de novo necessum habeat, neque quod unis corporibus non utatur tanquam mediis ad movendum alia, neque quod ejusmodi mediorum formis ac texturis ad sic potius quam aliter movendum non utatur illa olim lata & in omnia tempora, loca, operandi modos & c. sese exporrigens sive lex, sive voluntas; sed quod hujus unius efficacia & virtute, nulla alia uspiam interveniente, peragantur omnia: id quod profecto ex ipsa natura illius legis universalis & immutabilis sua sponte fluit."* (Caput IV: *"Quod mentem nostram de DEO, Naturae uti solo & unico Conditor, sic Rectore quoque & Motore, sua solius virtute omnia, quae Natura agere & operari vulgo dicitur, in ipsa & per ipsam operante, plenius ac dilucidius exponet,"* paragraph vi; p. 19.)

true mutual commerce between individual natural substances in this scheme, and therefore no physical influx, though the harmony of nature is not individually but generally (once and for all) established in it, unlike in Malebranchian natural philosophy.

It goes almost without saying after all this that, for STURM, no *anima mundi* subordinate to God is conceivable, since the concept of the world soul (which he considers in *capita* II/viii and III/v as a hypothesis of Henry MORE and PLATO, respectively), would be that of a *causa efficiens proxima* as well. STURM rejects the existence of an *anima mundi* by a *diairesis*; but before we see how he argues, we have to point out that he uses the terms *spiritus universi* and *spiritus mundi* indistinctively with the same meaning as *anima mundi* and *anima universi*.²¹ In a first instance, then, STURM considers this ‘soul or spirit’ of the universe as a material being (“*corpus tamen esse, quia diffusum & extensum, necessum est*”).²² Evidently, a soul of the world thus conceived could not be vested with prudence, consideration, thought or ratiocination, for the simple reason that it would be corporeal even if composed of subtle matter:

*But if they believe that that corporeal being (scil. the world soul) is to be subordinated to this presupposed incorporeal ruler (scil. God) as a servant and vicar on whose work and activity the rest of the sensible effects in this universe depend, then it is neither necessary nor indeed possible to attribute any degree of prudence or judgment to it. Since in this fine and extremely light powder of diffused matter; human reason is unable to identify anything besides thinness, figure, possibly solidity, and agitation..., it would be completely unworthy of human reason to ascribe rationality and foresight to such things that lack all reason.*²³

Here, STURM is clearly not ready systematically to think the *anima mundi* as a spiritual substance in mutual commerce with the material cosmos conceived as an organic body, which the universal soul would inform. In a second approach, however, he examines also the possibility that this hypothetical ‘soul or spirit’ of the world, “*anima vel spiritus mundi*”,²⁴ is *immaterial*. This time he contends that a universal ‘soul or spirit’ thus conceived would be none else but the Christian God,

²¹The same terminological fuzziness may be observed in e.g., H. MORE’s *Immortalitas animae* as well (cf. MORE, vol. II/2, p. 431).

²²STURM: *Idolum naturae...*, *caput* III/v; p. 21. – The materiality of the (world) soul is a classical Stoic thesis (cf. e.g., SENECA: *Quaestiones naturales*; see *infra*, Part III, Chapter 2, Section 5 of Chapter 7), which is extensively refuted by PLOTINUS in e.g., *Enneads* IV 2 & IV 7.

²³“*Quod si vero praesupposito huic rectori incorporeo (scil. Deo) Naturam istam corpoream (scil. animam mundi) tanquam ministram & vicariam subordinandam putent, a cujus opera & activitate effectus coeteri sensibiles in hoc universo mundo dependeant, tum neque necessum esset ei prudentiae quiddam aut consilii tribuere (...) neque vero etiam possibile. Cum enim in ejusmodi materiae diffusae levissimis pulvisculis, praeter exilitatem, figuram, soliditatem forte, & agitationem nihil reperire humana ratio possit..., oppido indignum humana ratione esset, rationem & providentiam his talibus sine omni ratione adscribere.*” (STURM: *Idolum naturae...*, *caput* III/v; pp. 21–22. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 21.

at least if this spirit is conceived also as the Maker and director of the universe. In this case, there is certainly no theoretical problem with the concept:

Because if on this occasion, someone conceived of an immaterial substance, which nevertheless – by virtue of its intimate presence in every single part of the world everywhere – would form, order, preserve, move by its own force, and wisely govern every single part of the world, then the soul or spirit of the world would be the same thing to this person as God is to us..., and so our disagreement would concern the name only and not the thing itself; and besides, it should be necessarily admitted that such an immaterial substance is not a part but the guardian, maker and ruler of this material world.²⁵

This idea, despite the terminological confusion it causes, is interesting because it is in accord with how LEIBNIZ tolerates the nominal identification of God, *l'esprit universel supreme*, with a 'universal spirit' in a passage of his *Considerations sur la doctrine de l'Esprit Universel Unique*, as we shall see below, in § 13.

The Sturmiian argument – from the analytical examination of the concept of an omnipotent God against causes subordinate to God but more proximate to nature than God – is a powerful one. It suggests that the omnipotent being must be thought to predetermine the operations of universal nature through the act of Creation, and then to cease to act as an efficient cause for ever more. While this conception of divine predetermination certainly does not exclude creationism,²⁶ the great philosophical question in this system will be the interpretation of God's presence (*praesentia Dei*) in the natural world.

The specific difference of LEIBNIZ's natural philosophy, when compared to MALEBRANCHE and STURM, respectively, is that it assigns a position of *mediated agency* to God in the functioning of the natural world, which works *immediately* by virtue of its own inherent permanent active powers it has received from the First Cause

²⁵“*Si quis enim incorpoream heic fingat substantiam, & quae tamen omnibus & singulis mundi partibus intime & ubique praesens, omnes ac singulas formaverit, ordinaverit, etiamnum conservet, suâ virtute moveat & sapientissime gubernet; iis anima vel spiritus mundi hoc idem, quod nobis DEUS... esset, neque adeo in re ipsa sed nomine solo dissensus, idque insuper necessario confitendum, ejusmodi substantiam immaterialem materiati hujus mundi non partem, sed praesidem, opificem & rectorem esse.*” (*Ibid.* Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting added.)

²⁶The full determination of the natural world is a consequence of divine perfection also in LEIBNIZ's theory of Creation (cf. *De rerum originatione radicali*, 1697), in which the Leibnizian principle of determination entails the maximum repletion, i.e. the highest grade of perfection, of the world: “*Hinc vero manifestissime intelligitur ex infinitis possibilitum combinationibus seriebusque possibilitibus existere eam, per quam plurimum essentiae seu possibilitatis perducitur ad existendum. Semper scilicet est in rebus principium determinationis quod a Maximo Minimove petendum est, ut nempe maximus praestetur effectus, minimo ut sic dicam sumtu.*” (GERHARDT ed., 1965, vol. VII, p. 303; underlining added.) – But the evident difference between the Leibnizian theory and that of STURM is that STURM puts the perfection of the world in its fully mechanical determination, while in LEIBNIZ's eye, the world seems more perfect if the finite individual substances operate by their own inherent powers. These respective conceptions of the perfection of the world, to be sure, derive from different understandings of how the world would best express *divine* perfection and glory.

(*impressio creata perdurans in rebus*).²⁷ In contradistinction to this, finite corporeal substances or the universe as a whole cannot be considered properly *active* in STURM's system: each material part of the whole suffers the mechanical impression of another one, and mechanically passes it on to another in turn, the omnipotence of God guaranteeing the preestablished harmony of nature. For MALEBRANCHE, on the other hand, the capital point in natural philosophy is that God has to apply His infinite power each time a natural event takes place (when an occasional cause starts to operate), so He is active (*actuusus*) uninterruptedly and everywhere in physical time and space – God is always actually *at work* in the finite substances.

For LEIBNIZ as well, God's continuous maintaining activity (*creatio continuata, concursus divinus*; cf. *infra*, Section 6) or active presence is metaphysically necessary for the world to continue to exist and to be efficient:

*But just as that first and universal cause conserving everything does not destroy, but rather causes the natural subsistence of a thing beginning to exist, or its perseverance in existence, once existence is granted, so in the same way he will not destroy, but will rather support the natural efficacy of a thing incited to motion or its perseverance in acting, once it is impressed.*²⁸

However, God's activity in this aspect is restricted to the *sustentation* of the finite substances, which He can do by being the only non-contingent substance, the *ultima ratio rerum*, or the necessary being. But of course, God is also the *origin* of the existence and power finite substances enjoy. Hence, the Leibnizian system does conserve the privileged philosophical status of God in that God is the *condition of reality* in it, but is more inclined than the other two systems to see nature as an entity that has received its own principle of activity, or better, *life*, and is not a simple machine (*bruta machina*, STURM) of divine make, or a medium of manifestation for autonomous divine activity (MALEBRANCHE). When all is said and done, however, it seems undeniable that all three systems actually present systematic elaborations on the perfections of the Infinite Being, but they identify these perfections in different divine attributes, and then propound their respective positions in argumentative form.

So far, we have discussed the general natural philosophical and metaphysical setting that enables LEIBNIZ to say that for him, the theory of the world soul is philosophically superfluous, *praeter necessitatem*. In his *De ipsa natura* (see citation under Section 1 of Chapter 2), LEIBNIZ first accepts STURM's view, and discards the hypothesis of the *anima Universi*. Then, still in concord with STURM's *Idolum naturae*, LEIBNIZ rejects the theory of Ralph CUDWORTH (1617–1688)

²⁷LEIBNIZ: *De ipsa natura...*, vol. IV, point 5; GERHARDT ed., 1965, p. 507 (not a literal citation).

²⁸“...quemadmodum prima illa et universalis causa omnia conservans non tollit, sed facit potius rei existere incipientis subsistentiam naturalem, seu in existendo perseverationem semel concessam; ita eadem non tollet, sed potius confirmabit rei in motum concitatae efficaciam naturalem, seu in agendo perseverationem semel impressam.” (*De ipsa natura...*, point 13, *ad finem*; GERHARDT, C. I., 1965, vol. IV, p. 514. Transl. by R. ARIEW and D. GARBER, eds., p. 165.)

concerning the created directive intelligences, the *creatae quaedam intelligentiae*, which are in charge of controlling all natural processes.²⁹ Neither these hypotheses, nor some others of a similar tendency, deserve serious philosophical analysis, says LEIBNIZ, because they are ‘*partly impossible, partly redundant*’, so no explicit argument is necessary against them³⁰:

And so, I think that the omniscient heat of Hippocrates, and Avicenna’s Cholcodean giver of souls, the exceedingly wise plastic virtue of Scaliger and others, and the hylarchic principle of Henry More are in part impossible, and in part unnecessary. I hold that it is enough for the machine of things to have been constructed with such wisdom that through its very development, those very wonders come to pass... And so I approve of the fact that the

²⁹Cambridge Platonic R. CUDWORTH in “A Digression concerning the Plastick Life of Nature” (book I, Chapter III, paragraph xxxvii) of *The True Intellectual System of the Universe* (1678), argues that there must exist an incorporeal ‘plastic nature’ which directs the regular motion of lifeless matter in the universe and gives organic internal form to the living beings. CUDWORTH conceives of this controlling entity as a lower ‘life’ or soul, subordinate to a mind or higher soul, which prescribes its laws of operation. He attributes a plastic nature not only to individual living beings but also to the natural universe as a sympathetic whole (whereby he draws on PLOTINUS’s world of ideas). It is important to note that his chief reason for positing the plastic nature is theological, as he wants to escape hylozoistic immanentism as well as (the Cartesian) ‘Mechanic Theism’, asserting in respect of the latter that it would contradict the perfection of God to be subjected to the ‘Sollicitous Encumberment’ of having to direct the operations of nature immediately. In point 26 of the above-mentioned paragraph, CUDWORTH offers us the following summary of his concept of ‘plastic nature’: “...it is a certain Lower Life than the Animal, which acts Regularly and Artificially, according to the Direction of Mind and Understanding, Reason and Wisdom, for Ends, or in order to Good, though it self do not know the Reason of what it does, nor is Master of that Wisdom according to which it acts, but only a Servant to it, and Drudging Executioner of the same; it operating Fatally and Sympathetically, according to Laws and Commands, prescribed to it by a Perfect Intellect, and imprest upon it; and which is either a Lower Faculty of some Conscious Soul, or else an Inferiour kind of Life or Soul by it self; but essentially depending upon an Higher Intellect.” (CUDWORTH, p. 172; roman characters by CUDWORTH. See entire paragraph for further details: pp. 146–174.) J. A. PASSMORE puts this theory in the frame of CUDWORTH’s controversy against the Cartesian mechanic natural philosophy and Occasionalism: “To Descartes there is simply the dualism of mind and matter; but... Cudworth’s division of reality comes at a different point, as a dualism of the active and the passive. Then Cudworth makes a further distinction, within the active, between ‘plastic powers’ which pursue ends without deliberation (of which animal instinct provides the most striking examples) and the deliberate operations of the human mind. He hoped, with the aid of this modified dualism, to escape from mechanism without falling into the occasionalism of ‘bigotical religionists’. The world is not a giant clockwork, which could be given an initial push and then left to its own devices; there is life in it and, with life, novelty and creativity. At the same time, it is not necessary to suppose deliberate divine intention behind every operation. ... If we think of these plastic powers (or perhaps of a single plastic power – ‘Nature’) as the agents of divine intentions, we can understand both the perfections and imperfections of animal life; the clockwork theory, on the other hand, cannot explain its perfections, nor occasionalism its imperfections.” (PASSMORE, Chapter II, pp. 24 and 25.) On the related theory of CUDWORTH’s friend H. MORE concerning the “universal spirit (or soul) of nature”, see *infra*, Section 12 of Chapter 7.

³⁰LEIBNIZ nevertheless more extensively confronts CUDWORTH’s theory of the plastic natures in the 1705 *Considerations sur les Principes de Vie, et sur les Natures Plastiques, par l’Auteur du Systeme de l’Harmonie préétablie* (see *infra*, Section 2; text in GERHARDT ed., 1965, vol. VI, pp. 538–546).

distinguished gentleman (scil. STURM) *rejects the fiction of any sort of created, wise nature, fashioning and governing the mechanisms of bodies.*³¹

There is no philosophical necessity, claims LEIBNIZ, to posit additional generative-regulative entities (beyond God and nature itself) in natural philosophy; it has been enough (“*satisque habeo...*”) for God to construct a machinery of nature with such wisdom as enables it to perform its miraculous work by itself. Hence, all created secondary efficient causes may be dismissed without employing particular arguments against them. But LEIBNIZ’s consent with STURM ends here, for he has a vision of the universe as an aggregate of living things, or at least of really active things conceived *on the analogy of living beings*.

LEIBNIZ had, however, taken a significantly different position on the theory of the world soul, and on the identification of God with this soul, in *Deum non esse animam mundi*, and in *Considerations sur la doctrine d’un Esprit Universel Unique*. But before we proceed to analyze his arguments, we need to define his key concepts in the domain of the philosophy of soul: *mens* and *anima*.

2 Propedeutical Characterization of the Difference Between Mens & Anima, According to Leibniz: Systeme Nouveau de la Nature... (Publ. 1695), Letter to R. Ch. Wagner (4th June 1710), Principes de la Nature et de la Grace, Fondés en Raison (Appr. 1712–1714), etc.

A first difficulty for a reader of the Leibnizian texts we plan to analyze will consist in the circumstance that they are difficult to interpret without a clear understanding of the difference LEIBNIZ sees between soul (*anima* or *ame*) on the one hand, and mind or spirit (*mens* or *esprit*) on the other hand (in his Latin texts, LEIBNIZ only seldom uses the noun *spiritus*, while he more frequently uses the adjective *spiritualis*). It appears that before discussing LEIBNIZ’s particular arguments against the world soul in Section 4, it will be best to expound this difference here in a propedeutical manner. Making this distinction is especially important for an analysis of the *Considerations...*, which is a perhaps less systematic exposé of the Leibnizian criticism of the world soul theory. We shall carry out this presentation with the help of several more texts that systematically treat the theory of the soul or the distinction of the soul from the mind. The most important of these are the *New System of Nature* (*Systeme nouveau de la nature et de la communication des substances, aussi bien*

³¹“*Itaque et calidum omniscium Hippocratis, et Cholcodeam animarum datricem Avicennae, et illam sapientissimam Scaligeri aliorumque virtutem plasticam, et principium hylarchicum Henrici Mori, partim impossibilia, partim superflua puto; satisque habeo, machinam rerum tanta sapientia esse conditam, ut ipso ejus progressu admiranda illa contingant... Itaque quod Vir Cl. (scil. STURM) naturae cujusdam creatae, sapientis, corporum machinas formantis gubernantisque figmentum rejicit, probo. Sed nec consequi inde nec rationi consentaneum puto, ut omnem vim creatam actricem insitam rebus denegemus.*” (*De ipsa natura...*, point 2; GERHARDT ed., 1965, vol. IV, p. 505. Transl. by R. ARIEW and D. GARBER, eds., p. 156, underlining added.)

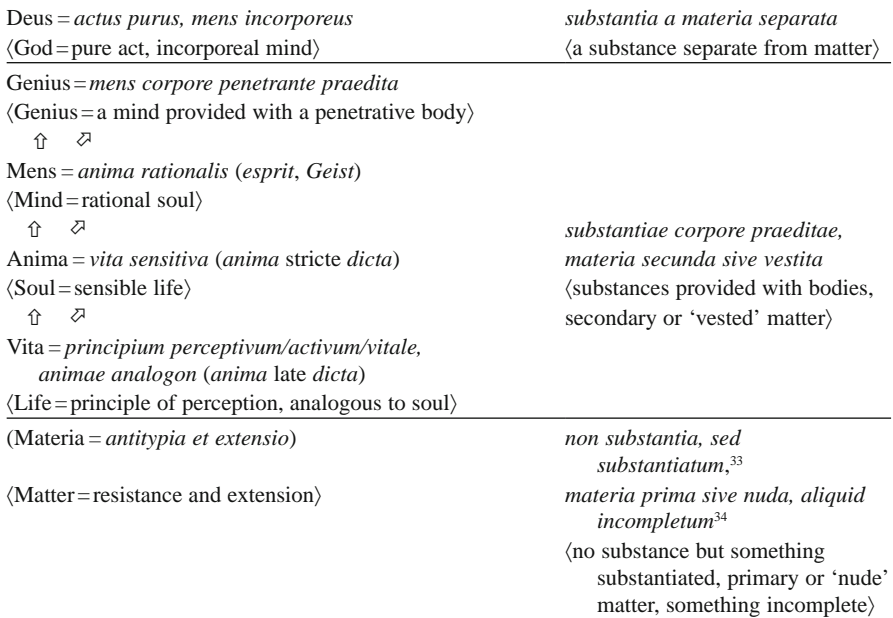
que de l'union qu'il y a entre l'ame et le corps, publ. 1695); the *Considerations Concerning the Principles of Life* (*Considerations sur les Principes de Vie, et sur les Natures Plastiques*, 1705); one of LEIBNIZ's letters to R. Ch. WAGNER (of 4th June 1710); and the late synthesis *Rationally Founded Principles of Nature and Mercy* (*Principes de la Nature et de la Grace, fondés en raison*, 1712–1714).

LEIBNIZ contends that there is a symmetrically ordered hierarchy of substances, as is stated most clearly in the letter written to WAGNER. We cite from this letter only part of the passage dealing with the classification of the spiritual substances:

In a broad sense, soul is the same as life, i.e., the principle of life or, in other words, the principle of internal action which exists in a simple thing, i.e., monad and to which an external action corresponds. ... And in this sense, soul is attributed not only to living beings but also to all other perceiving things. In a strict sense, soul stands for a nobler kind of life, i.e., sensible life, which possesses not only a faculty of perception but also one of sensation, when perception is completed with attention and memory. In the same manner; mind is, in turn, a nobler kind of soul, i.e., a rational soul, in which sensation is completed with reason... Hence, in the same manner as mind is a rational soul, soul is a sensible life, and life is a principle of perception.

...as far as genii are concerned, I believe that they are minds provided with a very penetrative body, which is suitable for carrying out different tasks and which they, perhaps, can change according to their pleasure... Only God is a substance really separate from matter, in so far as He is pure act, unable to undergo any influence...³²

If we complete this statement with information from other passages in the same and other documents, we can draw the following diagram:



³²“Late *anima idem est quod vita seu principium vitale, nempe principium actionis internae in re simplici seu monade existens, cui actio externa respondet. ... At hoc sensu anima non tantum*

Beginning from the lowest level, we have to point out that LEIBNIZ's definition of substance ("*a being capable of action*", "*Etre capable d'Action*")³⁵ disqualifies primary matter from being a substance, so long as it has not been attached to a *substantia simplex*, that is, a monad or internal form. Next, simple substances or monads are by definition spiritual (immaterial): their simplicity results from their indivisibility. All created or derivative monads are vested by God, the primordial monad (*monas primitiva*) with an organic, i.e., 'living' body ("*Et praeterea omnis Monas creata est corpore aliquo organico praedita...*").³⁶ But their principle of 'life' is essentially a power of perception, which is defined by LEIBNIZ as a representation of what is outside in what is inside, "*repraesentatio externi in interno*",³⁷ or of what is manifold in what is simple, "*representations du composé... dans le simple*".³⁸ This representation of the universe in the mirror of the monad is the first principle of activity and life at the lowest level of substantiality: "*chaque Monade est un miroir vivant, ou doué d'action interne, representatif de l'univers...*"³⁹

animalibus, sed et omnibus aliis percipientibus tribuetur. Stricte anima sumitur pro specie vitae nobiliore, seu pro vita sensitiva, ubi non nuda est facultas percipiendi, sed et praeterea sentiendi, quando nempe perceptioni adjungitur attentio et memoria. Quemadmodum vicissim mens est species animae nobilior, nempe mens est anima rationalis, ubi sensationi accedit ratio... Ut ergo mens est anima rationalis, ita anima est vita sensitiva, et vita est principium perceptivum. ...de Geniis sentio, esse mentes corpore valde penetrante et ad operandum apto praeditas, quod fortasse pro lubitu mutare possunt... Solus Deus substantia est vere a materia separata, cum sit actus purus, nulla patiendi potestate praeditus...." (Letter to R. Ch. WAGNER, 4th June 1710; GERHARDT, C. I., ed., 1965, vol. VII, pp. 529–530. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting added.)

³³Untitled manuscript with the incipit "*Je Vous suis obligé, Monsieur,...*" of appr. 1716; GERHARDT, C. I., 1965, vol. VI, p. 625.

³⁴Cf. letter to J. BERNOUILLI (? 1698): "*Materia ipsa per se, seu moles, quam materiam primam vocare possis, non est substantia; imo nec aggregatum substantiarum, sed aliquid incompletum.*" (GERHARDT, C. I., 1971., vol. III/2, p. 537) On account of this metaphysical status of matter, W. SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN remarks that "*Obwohl es klar ist, dass der Materie in Leibniz' reifer Metaphysik kein fundamentaler ontologischer Status zukommt und ihre Existenz und Eigenschaften nur monadologisch erklärt werden können, ist ihr genauer Stellenwert umstritten... Es spricht einiges dafür, dass Leibniz der Materie nur im Blick auf ihr Perzipiertwerden seitens der Monaden Existenz zuspricht, was seine Philosophie in die Nähe des Berkeley'schen Idealismus rücken würde.*" (SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN, 2001, p. 1072.)

³⁵*Principes de la Nature et de la Grace, fondés en raison*, point 1; GERHARDT, C. I., 1965, vol. VI, p. 598.

³⁶Letter to BIERLING, 12 Aug. 1711; GERHARDT, C. I., 1965, vol. VII, p. 502.

³⁷Letter to R. Ch. WAGNER, 14th June 1710; GERHARDT, C. I., 1965, vol. VII, p. 529.

³⁸*Principes de la Nature et de la Grace, fondés en raison*, point 2; GERHARDT, C. I., 1965, vol. VI, p. 598.

³⁹*Ibid.*, Point 3; GERHARDT, C. I., 1965, vol. VI, p. 599.

This first principle of life is completed, in the respective letters to BOURGUET and BIERLING, and in *De ipsa natura* as well as in *Principes de la Nature et de la Grace, fondés en raison*, etc. with that of *appetition*, *appetitus*, the tendency or endeavour of a monad to go from one perception to another, “*tendance d’une perception à l’autre*”,⁴⁰ or as the untitled 1710 treatise puts it, “*agendi conatus ad novam perceptionem tendens*.”⁴¹ Hence, representation and endeavour are the two principles of self-generated, autonomous change (activity) within even the lowest-ranking monad. By virtue of the originality and self-sufficiency of this activity, the lowest monad is considered to be analogous to soul, and thereby to be ‘alive’, so one is entitled to say that the entire nature is full of ‘life’, “*toute la nature est pleine de vie*.”⁴² There is no particle of matter that could be void of a life conceived as an internal representation of external reality, coupled with a tendency autonomously to change the focus or angle of representation.⁴³

From the lowest monad, *vita*, we then rise to the next level of substantiality, that of *anima stricte dicta* or soul in the strict sense (even more precisely, *animal soul*). Within the *genus* of created monads, the definition of a higher species is always an amplification of the definition of the proximate lower species, with a new essential attribute or differentia.⁴⁴ Thus, *anima* is *vita sensitiva*, *mens* is *anima rationalis*, whereas *genius* is *mens* with a penetrating (aethereal) body. Therefore, the essential attributes of soul in the strict sense are perception, endeavour and sensation (*sensio*, *sentiment*), which is a composite of *attentio* and *memoria*. LEIBNIZ adds in *Principes de la Nature et de la Grace...* that the perception specific to animal soul necessitates a higher degree of distinctness or precision than what is attributable to the (infinite and unknown series of) lower monads, the *vitae*:

But when the organs of a monad are set up in such a way that by means of them the impressions which they receive, and consequently the perceptions which represent them, stand out more clearly and are more distinct (...), this can amount to a feeling, which is to say a perception accompanied by a memory – that is, of which a certain echo remains for a long time and makes itself heard in appropriate

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, Point 2; GERHARDT, C. I., 1965, vol. VI, p. 598. Almost literally repeated in LEIBNIZ’s letter to BOURGUET (Dec. 1714): “...l’appetit est la tendance d’une perception à une autre”; GERHARDT, C. I., 1965, vol. III, p. 575. With reference to § 15 of the *Monadologie*, W. SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN defines this tendency as “*das Streben, das den Übergang von einer Perception zur anderen bewirkt*.” (SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN, 2001, p. 1071.)

⁴¹Untitled Latin study with the *incipit* “*Materia in se sumta...*” (prob. 1710); GERHARDT, C. I., 1965, vol. VII, p. 330.

⁴²*Principes de la Nature et de la Grace, fondés en raison*, point 1; GERHARDT, C. I., 1965, vol. VI, p. 598.

⁴³See a treatment of LEIBNIZ’s alleged *panpsychism* below, [Section 3](#).

⁴⁴This definitional reference is marked in the diagram with a tilted arrow, while upright arrows denote hierarchical relation (subordination).

*circumstances. A living thing of this kind is called an animal, since its monad is called a soul.*⁴⁵

Next, the specific differentia of *human soul*, a *species animae nobilior*, is reason. Soul vested with reason is called *mens* (occasionally *spiritus*) or *esprit* by LEIBNIZ, and *Geist* in the German Leibnizian terminology (see, e.g., J. Ch. GOTTSCHED's popular synthesis *Erste Gründe der gesammten Weltweisheit*, 1755, 71762).⁴⁶ Hence, *mens* is a higher soul, to which an organic body is joined, and which has the faculties of a relatively clear perception (internal representation), endeavour (tendency to shift the angle of representation), sensation (attention and memory) and reasoning (ratiocination from universal truths). Perception, however, is, in this case, to be conceived as *apperception*, i.e., reflexive cognition of the internal representation: conscience, *conscientia sui*. As LEIBNIZ puts it in *Principes de la Nature et de la Grace, fondés en raison*:

*Thus it is important to make a distinction between a perception, which is the internal state of a monad which represents external things, and apperception, which is consciousness, or the reflective knowledge of that internal state. Apperception is not given to all souls, and is not given to particular souls all the time.*⁴⁷

Interestingly, LEIBNIZ establishes the principle of individual moral responsibility, and thereby of moral personhood, immediately not on the faculty of self-cognition, but on that of *reason* (since apperception and reason mutually depend on each other in the human being, as far as moral responsibility is concerned). Reason, the capacity of knowing (and the actual knowledge of) the eternal truths is the faculty which directly entitles us to membership in the city of God, in the community of morally responsible beings, and grants us *moral immortality* (*immortalitas*). This species of

⁴⁵“Mais quand la Monade a des organes si ajustés que par leur moyen il y a du relief et du distingué dans les impressions qu'ils reçoivent, et par consequent dans les perceptions qui les representent (...) cela peut aller jusqu'au sentiment, c'est à dire jusqu'à une perception accompagnée de memoire, à savoir; dont un certain echo demeure longtemps pour se faire e{n}tendre dans l'occasion; et un tel vivant est appelé Animal, comme sa Monade est appelée une Ame.” (*Principes de la Nature et de la Grace, fondés en raison*, Point 4; GERHARDT, C. I., 1965, vol. VI, p. 599. Disturbing printing mistake in the last-but-one line of the French text, correction on the basis of other editions. Transl. by R. S. WOOLHOUSE & R. FRANCK, eds., p. 260, highlighting by the translators.)

⁴⁶Cf., e.g., §§ 1130–1131 of this work, where the essence of God is defined as *Geist* which is explained as *spiritus* and *substantia spiritualis*, etc. (GOTTSCHED, vol. I, p. 574, etc.).

⁴⁷“Ainsi il est bon de faire distinction entre la Perception qui est l'état interieur de la Monade represantant les choses externes, et l'Apperception qui est la Conscience, ou la connoissance reflexive de cet état interieur, laquelle n'est point donnée à toutes les Ames, ni tousjours à la même Ame.” (point 4; GERHARDT, C. I., 1965, vol. VI, p. 600; underlining added. Transl. by R. S. WOOLHOUSE & R. FRANCK, eds., p. 260, highlighting by the translators.) On the distinction of animal soul from human soul, cf. also the study with the incipit “*Materia in se sumta...*”, *ad finem*.

indestructibility is superior in kind to the physical indestructibility (*inextinguibilitas*, *indefectibilitas*) of all other monads:

...man, by virtue of his use of reason... is entitled to a communion with God and, on this account, to reward and punishment under the divine government. Hence, he keeps not only his life and soul like the animals but also his conscience and the memory of his former condition and, in a word, his person (after his death). He is immortal not only physically but also morally; so we attribute immortality proper only to the human soul.⁴⁸

It is perhaps on the ground of the human soul's close relatedness to God that LEIBNIZ asserts it, more than probably in a metaphorical sense, to be a particle of the divine 'breath': "*animam divinae particulam aerae dicimus...*"⁴⁹

We encounter, then, the class of *genii* as the last grade of finite simple substances. These are minds (*mentes*) vested by God with to some extent spiritualized bodies, which enable them to penetrate the more material bodies. The spiritualized bodies of the *genii*, says LEIBNIZ, can possibly change their shape or other attributes, as it pleases the *genii*. In moral respect, the *genii* are divided into good and evil ones, and they play a certain role in influencing the fate of the human soul after the death of the individual, depending on whether he or she associated with the good or the evil *genii* during his or her earthly life.⁵⁰ This means in practical terms that LEIBNIZ, if somewhat hypothetically, admits the existence of angels and demons. He does not, however, regard them as supernatural beings, but considers their operations to be part of the kingdom of nature.

With this, we have finished our propedeutical overview of the hierarchy of the simple substances LEIBNIZ posits, and may take our next, logically necessary step, which is a general consideration about his alleged panpsychism, before we go on to weigh his particular arguments against the theory of the world soul.

⁴⁸"...homo... ob rationis usum societatis cum Deo atque adeo praemii et poenae in divina gubernatione est capax. Itaque non tantum vitam et animam ut bruta, sed et conscientiam sui et memoriam pristini status et ut verbo dicam, personam servat (scil. post mortem). Nec tantum physice, sed etiam moraliter est immortalis: unde stricto sensu soli Humanae Animae immortalitas tribuitur." (Letter to R. Ch. WAGNER; GERHARDT ed., 1965, vol. VII, pp. 530–531. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) Cf. also *Principes de la Nature et de la Grace...*, point 15: "C'est pourquoy tous les esprits, soit des hommes, soit des genies, entrant en vertu de la Raison et des Verités éternelles dans une espèce de Société avec Dieu, sont des membres de la Cité de Dieu..." (GERHARDT ed., 1965, vol. VI, p. 605.)

⁴⁹*De ipsa natura...*, point (16); GERHARDT ed., 1965, vol. IV, p. 515.

⁵⁰Cf. "*Eoque sensu dici potest, virtutem sibi ipsi praemium, scelus sibi ipsi poenam afferre, quia naturali quadam consequentia pro ultimo animae statu, prout expiata aut non expiata decedit, naturale quoddam oritur divergium, a Deo in natura praeordinatum, Geniorum etiam bonorum malorumque accedente interventu, prout alterutris nos sociavimus, quorum operationes sunt naturales, etsi natura eorum nostra sit sublimior.*" (GERHARDT ed., 1965, vol. VII, p. 531; underlining added.) – Though the *genii* to some extent influence the fate of the individual soul after death, they do not determine it. The primary cause determining the fate of the soul is his or her intrinsic moral quality in Leibnizian moral philosophy.

3 *Leibniz's Alleged Panpsychism versus the Organicistic Interpretation of His Doctrine of Substance*

Now that we have sketched the structure and the content of the Leibnizian philosophy of the soul, we still face the difficult question of its general evaluative interpretation, for it appears *prima facie* that to LEIBNIZ'S mind, the whole natural universe is *alive*, in the sense that every finite substance has a soul or something analogous to soul – which means that there is a kind of life (“*vitale aliquid*”) all over in the matter constituting the universe. Such a position, however, is easily interpreted as *panpsychism*. The difficulty of interpretation is caused by the presence, in the Leibnizian texts, of relevant statements which seem perfectly contradictory to each other: cf., e.g., “*it must be shown that everything is animate*” (“*ostendendum omnia esse animata*”, in *Elementorum physicae libellus*, appr. 1685),⁵¹ and “*it should not be said... that every part of matter is animate*” (“*il ne faut point dire ... , que chaque portion de la matiere est animée*”, in *Considerations sur les Principes de Vie*, 1705).⁵² This question is important for us here, since it may be related to the problem of the *anima mundi*: if every finite substance has a soul (*panpsychism*), then, *if* the substantial identity of every soul can be proved, the conclusion could be drawn that the universe, as the aggregate of all finite substances has a higher soul on its own, i.e., that there is a world soul.

The panpsychistic interpretation, then, is supported by passages like, e.g., the following in the *De ipsa natura*:

*On the contrary, I believe that it is consistent with neither order nor with the beauty or reasonableness of things for there to be something living, that is, acting from within itself, in only a very small portion of matter, when it would contribute to greater perfection for such things to be everywhere. Nor is there any reason why souls or things analogous to souls should not be everywhere, even if dominant and consequently intelligent souls, like human souls, cannot be everywhere.*⁵³

It is not reasonable, argues LEIBNIZ, to suppose that a kind of life: immanent, i.e., not transitive activity (*aliquid immanenter agens*), should be *only (tantum)* in a small part of matter, as it increases the perfection of the universe if *all* matter is permeated with life. Since LEIBNIZ is convinced, on a rational theological basis,

⁵¹Also designated as *Darstellung der physikalischen Lehren* (both titles probably editorial); GERLAND ed., p. 111.

⁵²*Considerations sur les Principes de Vie, et sur les Natures Plastiques, par l'Auteur du Systeme de l'harmonie préétablie* (1705); GERHARDT ed., 1965, vol. VI, p. 539.

⁵³“*Et contra potius arbitror, neque ordini, neque pulchritudini rationive rerum esse consentaneum, ut vitale aliquid seu immanenter agens sit in exigua tantum parte materiae, cum ad majorem perfectionem pertineat, ut sit in omni; neque quicquam obstat quo minus ubique sint animae aut analogae saltem animabus, etsi dominantes animae, atque adeo intelligentes, quales sunt humanae, ubique esse non possint.*” (*De ipsa natura...*, point 12; GERHARDT, C. I., 1965, vol. IV, p. 512. Transl. by R. ARIEW and D. GARBER, eds., p. 163, slightly adjusted by M. VASSÁNYI; underlining added.)

that God has chosen the best possible world from among an infinite number of possible worlds He represents to Himself, he may conclude from these premisses that every finite material substance is possessed with a principle of 'life'. This principle of 'life' is soul or something analogous to soul, i.e., the substantial form, the lower monad, as we have seen.

In the interpretation of LEIBNIZ's position in this question, it is reasonable to side with A. GURWITSCH who, in his eminent LEIBNIZ-monography, sets out to disprove the panpsychistic and to prove the organicistic interpretation of the Leibnizian doctrine of substance. The latter sees merely a principle of organic unity, a *principium individuationis* in the principle of 'life' of the lower monads. As GURWITSCH says, the principle of 'life' in a general sense is the individual law ("*Eigengesetz*") that predetermines the properties and dispositions of a particular finite substance: "*whatever happens, has happened and is going to happen to a particular substance follows from its own nature; all its actions derive from itself as a ground, and from nothing else.*"⁵⁴

This interpretation is underpinned by how LEIBNIZ, e.g., in the *Elementorum physicae libellus* (approx. 1685), describes the general meaning of the term 'soul' (*anima late*): 'soul' is the principle of individuality or organic unity, which 'informs' a piece of *materia nuda* so that the resulting soul-matter compound may become a particular thing, i.e., an individual corporeal substance, "*hoc aliquid sive unum quiddam*".⁵⁵ Hence, it is by virtue of the 'soul' as a unifying principle that the substance is numerically one and a whole, instead of being an accidental aggregate (*grex, exercitus*) of infinitely divisible particles:

*Hence, here we must discuss the soul and must show that everything is animate. If there were no soul nor any other form, the body would not be an existing thing, because in this case, we could not designate any part in it that is not composed of several parts in its turn, so that nothing could be designated in the body that could be named this particular thing or an individual thing.*⁵⁶

The proof of A. GURWITSCH's organicistic interpretation, then, lies with LEIBNIZ's doctrine of *analogy*. The mere substantial form, i.e., the lower monad is something analogous to soul, inasmuch as its internal *structure* and *function* are similar to those of a soul. LEIBNIZ thus has a tendency to perceive the principle of organic unity of the lower monad *as if (tamquam)* it was a lower form of life, and thus to

⁵⁴"*aus der Eigennatur der jeweiligen Substanz ergibt sich alles, was ihr geschieht, je geschehen ist und in aller Zukunft geschehen wird; alle ihre Handlungen stammen aus ihrem eigenen Grunde und aus diesem allein.*" (GURWITSCH, p. 193. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) Cf. as well pp. 190–196 (Kapitel IV, § 6: *Die Substanz als »principium vitale«*, a: *Abweisung der panpsychistischen Interpretation* and b: *Organizistische Deutung*); see especially pp. 192–193.

⁵⁵*Elementorum physicae libellus (Darstellung der physikalischen Lehren)*, ed. GERLAND, p. 111.

⁵⁶"*Hic ergo agendum de anima et ostendendum omnia esse animata. Nisi anima esset seu forma quaedam, corpus non esset ens aliquod, quia nulla eius pars assignari potest, quae non iterum ex pluribus constet, itaque nihil assignari posset in corpore, quod dici posset hoc aliquid sive unum quiddam.*" (*ibid.* Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting added.)

universalize the domain of life analogically. The lower monad appears in this context as an *imitation* of the higher monad:

*I found then that their (scil. of the monads) nature consists in force, and that from this there follows something analogous to sensation and appetite, so that we must conceive of them on the model of the notion we have of souls.*⁵⁷

Hence, LEIBNIZ's often-repeated, *prima facie* panpsychistic statement that 'all is alive, all is animate' means that all finite substances have at least an internal principle of organic unity, an *entelechia prima*, which ensures that they are substances in the proper sense. Whatever is not a living being in the proper sense of the word is at least full of an infinite amount of imperceptibly small organic substances. Hence, inorganic substances are not *exhaustively* full of life but only *permeated* by life: like a fish pond, they contain organic life everywhere (*ubique*), but are not animate in their *entirety*:

*Indeed, I admit that there are principles of life everywhere in nature... ..the principles of life belong to organic bodies only. It is true (according to my system) that there is no portion of matter which does not contain an infinite amount of organic animate bodies... But, for all this, it is not necessary to say that every single part of matter is animate. It is like we do not say that a fish pond full of fish is an animate body, although the fish is one.*⁵⁸

Thus, LEIBNIZ evades panpsychism and full-fledged hylozoism alike. Protesting against the Cartesian philosophy of soul (which attributes soul only to human beings), he insists on the quasi-universal presence of 'life' and 'soul' in the natural universe.⁵⁹

A. GURWITSCH summarizes his analysis in the following terms: for LEIBNIZ, "*the inorganic will reveal itself as a specific case or, more precisely, as a borderline case of the organic; further, it will appear that in his opinion, the inorganic is thoroughly pervaded by organisms.*"⁶⁰ The important point for us in this respect is that this

⁵⁷"*Je trouvoy donc que leur (scil. des Monades) nature consiste dans la force, et que de cela s'ensuit quelque chose d'analogique au sentiment et à l'appetit; et qu'ainsi il falloit les concevoir à l'imitation de la notion que nous avons des ames.*" (*Systeme nouveau de la nature et de la communication des substances, aussi bien que de l'union qu'il y a entre l'ame et le corps*, 1695; GERHARDT, C. I., 1965, vol. IV, p. 479. Transl. by R. ARIEW and D. GARBER, eds., p. 139. Underlining added; other highlighting by LEIBNIZ.)

⁵⁸"*J'admets effectivement les principes de vie repandus dans toute la nature... ..les principes de Vie n'appartiennent qu'aux corps organiques. Il est vray (selon mon Systeme) qu'il n'y a point de portion de la matiere, où il n'y ait une infinité de corps organiques et animés... Mais il ne faut point dire pour cela, que chaque portion de la matiere est animée, c'est comme nous ne disons pas qu'un étang plein de poissons est un corps animé, quoyque le poisson le soit.*" (*Considerations sur les Principes de Vie, et sur les Natures Plastiques, par l'Auteur du Systeme de l'Harmonie préétablie*, 1705; GERHARDT, C. I., 1965, vol. VI, pp. 538–539. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

⁵⁹Cf. *ibid.*: "*C'est que je crois en même temps et que ces principes de vie sont immortels, et qu'il y en a par tout; au lieu que suivant l'opinion commune les ames des bestes perissent, et que selon les Cartesiens il n'y a que l'homme qui ait veritablement une ame, et même qui ait perception et appetit...*" (p. 542)

⁶⁰"*...das Anorganische wird sich als ein Spezialfall, genauer: als Grenzfall des Organischen herausstellen; es wird sich ferner zeigen, daß nach Leibniz das Nicht-Organische durch und durch von Organismen durchsetzt ist.*" (GURWITSCH, p. 196. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, underlining added.)

tendency never comes near to positively attributing a soul to the world itself. It is LEIBNIZ's fundamental argument that the world is not a substance in the sense of being *numerically one*: this position would be equal to Spinozism, as LEIBNIZ points out in his December 1710 letter to BOURGUET. The doctrine of the monads presupposes that there is a plurality, and not a unicity, of substance in the universe:

On the contrary, it is precisely by virtue of these monads that Spinozism is destroyed, because (in this way,) there are as many genuine substances and, to put it this way, everlasting, living mirrors of the universe or, again, 'condensed' universes as there are monads; whereas for Spinoza, there is only one substance.⁶¹

Thus, if the world is an *aggregate* of finite compound substances, ordered in a pre-established harmony under the hegemony of the Highest Monad, then it appears to be logically impossible that the world as such may have a principle of organic unity or soul because the world, strictly speaking, is not a whole ("*un tout veritablement un*")⁶² and, therefore, not a substance either. This is, at least, the *nervus probandi* of one of the arguments LEIBNIZ himself puts forward in his *Deum non esse animam mundi*. Let us now see if this argument is valid within the bounds of the Leibnizian doctrine of substance.

4 Leibniz's Particular Arguments Against the Identification of God with the World Soul in *Deum non esse animam mundi*. The Problematic Possibility that There is an *anima mundi* Subordinate to God

LEIBNIZ uses the above-described reasoning as an argument against the identification of God with the world soul in *Deum non esse animam mundi* (appr. 1683–86). This text is so short that it may be cited in its entirety here:

It can be demonstrated that God is not the soul of the world; for either the world is finite or it is infinite. (a) If the world is finite, certainly God, who is infinite, cannot be the soul of the world. (b) But if the world is considered infinite, it is not one being or one body per se (just as elsewhere it was demonstrated that the infinite with respect to number and size is neither one nor a whole, but only the infinite with respect to perfection is one and a whole). Therefore, no soul of this kind can be understood. An infinite world, of course,

⁶¹"*Au contraire, c'est justement par ces Monades que le Spinosisme est detruit, car il y a autant de substances veritables, et pour ainsi dire, de miroirs vivants de l'Univers toujours subsistants, ou d'Univers concentres, qu'il y a des Monades, au lieu que, selon Spinoza, il n'y a qu'une seule substance.*" (GERHARDT ed., 1965, vol. III, p. 575; transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) Cf. also LEIBNIZ's untitled response to an unnamed critic of his system, which, according to the editor, C. I. GERHARDT, is probably LEIBNIZ's last statement of his own philosophy: "*Cependant je ne diray point, comme on m'impute, qu'il y a une seule substance de toutes choses, et que cette substance est l'esprit. Car il y a autant de substances toutes distinguees qu'il y a de Monades, et ces Monades ne composent point un tout veritablement un, et ce tout si elles en composoient, ne seroit point un esprit.*" (GERHARDT, C. I., 1965, vol. VI, p. 625; highlighting by LEIBNIZ.)

⁶²See preceding footnote.

*is no more one and a whole than an infinite number, which Galileo demonstrated to be neither one nor a whole. (c) There are other arguments as well, like the following one: God continuously makes the world, whereas the soul does not continuously make its body.*⁶³

The first philosophical statement of this note is that the *kind* of proof we are about to formulate against the identification of God with the world soul is a *demonstratio* (ἀπόδειξις). Theoretically, a *demonstratio* is a syllogistical proof from the principles of knowledge (ἀρχαὶ τῆς ἐπιστήμης), which are necessarily true (cannot be otherwise than they are), and which are intuited by intuitive reason, νοῦς. Hence, the conclusion from such an argument will also be necessarily true. In the present case, it will *absolutely* exclude, by the formalism of a *dilemma*, that ⟨a⟩ God is the soul of the world; and that ⟨b⟩ the world can have a soul at all. This is a *dilemma*, so if the case is ⟨a⟩, then in purely logical terms, the possibility remains open that there *is* a soul of the world that is not identical with, but subordinate to, God. Next, ⟨c⟩ is a non-specified and, therefore, not necessarily apodictical, kind of argument, which shows (and leaves undecided) just as much as ⟨a⟩.

In ⟨a⟩, LEIBNIZ contends that an infinite entity, God, may not be the soul of a finite entity, the world. God in this case would be the *entelechia prima* of His body, the universe. Hypothetically, this body-soul composite would seem, in a first approach, a perfect substance, *substantia seu ens completum*. For LEIBNIZ, the body-soul composite is the ideal type of substance, on the analogy of which all other real substances are conceived (cf. *supra*). Such a perfect or full substance cannot have contradictory essential attributes. However, the composite substance consisting of God and the world would have as its essential attributes both finitude (of the world) and infinity (of God). This hurts the principle of contradiction. Thus, from the absolute contradiction between the respective essential attributes of the constitutive elements of this hypothetical ‘perfect substance’, we can legitimately draw the conclusion that God cannot be the soul of the world if the world is a finite entity.

The argument in ⟨b⟩ is based on a related, but different consideration. As we have seen above, a substance is complete if it is identifiable as an individual. A substance is individual if it is numerically one; this is LEIBNIZ’s original insight, on which his “new system” is based. The world, if it is to be real, *must* consist of

⁶³“*Deum non esse mundi animam, demonstrari potest, vel enim mundus est finitus vel infinitus. (a) Si finitus est mundus, utique Deus qui infinitus est, Mundi anima dici non potest; (b) sin mundus infinitus ponatur, non est Ens unum seu unum per se corpus (quemadmodum alias demonstratum est infinitum numero et magnitudine neque esse unum neque esse totum; sed tantum infinitum perfectione unum et totum esse). Itaque nulla ejus intelligi potest anima. Mundus scilicet infinitus non magis est Unum et Totum, quam Numerus infinitus, quem neque unum neque totum esse demonstravit Galilaeus. (c) Sunt et alia argumenta quale illud est, quod Deus est productor mundi continuus, Anima autem corporis sui productrix non est.*” (AV, VI. Reihe, IV. Band, Teil B, p. 1492; № 293. Transl. by L. CARLIN, p. 7, slightly modified and completed by M. VASSÁNYI.) See CARLIN’s article concerning the problematic concept of infinity in the Leibnizian argument against the soul of the world in *Deum non esse mundi animam* (CARLIN, pp. 6–12).

identifiable individual parts or units, “since a multitude can only be real if it consists of genuine units” (“la multitude ne pouvant avoir sa réalité que des unités véritables”).⁶⁴ When we suppose that the world is infinite, we do not use the term ‘infinite’ with reference to perfection (as we do in the case of God), but with reference to the number of constitutive parts, or to extension in space. Infinity in this case specifically refers to the possibility of infinite progression in space, or infinite addition of material parts to the universe. If, however, this possibility obtains, then the world is not a *whole*, says LEIBNIZ: it is undetermined and fuzzy, a mass rather than a substance. But if it does not have clear-cut boundaries, then it does not have, precisely, a *principium individuationis*. The principle of individuation is soul; so if the world is fuzzy, then it does not have a soul, argues LEIBNIZ. This conclusion, again, has been reached by a series of analytical judgments.

⟨c⟩ departs from the rational theological thesis that God also sustains (*sustentatio*) the created substances: the term *productor continuus* refers to the theory of continuous creation (*creatio continuata*).⁶⁵ Although God vested the finite substances with existence at the event of Creation, they would instantaneously cease to exist without God’s sustaining activity, as their ground of existence is the *ens extramundanum*, the unconditioned condition of existence. On the other hand, soul is nothing other than the first perfection, ἐντελέχεια ἡ πρώτη of the body correlated with it, not the creator of body. Soul is the substantial form of matter, but the ground of existence of both primary matter and substantial form is God. Hence, in respect of the whole natural universe, God fulfils a very different function from that of a soul. God is the absolutely necessary, external *causa sufficiens* of the concatenation of all finite things, i.e., the world, says LEIBNIZ. Since His essential attributes are different from those of a soul in general, He cannot be any kind of soul in particular, and therefore not the world soul either.

Hence, LEIBNIZ leaves the initial alternative between ⟨a⟩ and ⟨b⟩ undecided; his aim was to prove that by either ⟨a⟩ or ⟨b⟩, God is certainly not the soul of the world. ⟨c⟩ is superadded as additional evidence of a case that has already been decided. At the same time, the possibility that there may be a world soul subordinate to God is not refuted, as we have pointed out above. Yet it seems that there is some dialectical difficulty around the *nervus probandi*, namely, the concept of *substance* in ⟨a⟩ and ⟨b⟩, respectively.

It appears that in ⟨a⟩, we may reconstruct the argument as follows: a *substantia completa* emerges from the correlation of an *entelechia prima* and primary matter (which becomes body by the in-formation of its substantial form). Such an *ens completum* cannot have essential attributes that absolutely exclude each other, etc. In ⟨b⟩, however, the world is considered from the very beginning not as an incomplete substance, wanting an internal form, but as an inorganic aggregate (*grex, exercitus*) of finite substances. But, in principle, it would be possible to consider the

⁶⁴ *Système nouveau de la nature et de la communication des substances* etc.; GERHARDT ed., 1965, vol. IV, p. 478.

⁶⁵ Cf., e.g., ⟨*Discours de Métaphysique*⟩ (1686), §§ XXVIII & XXXII.

infinite expansion of the world as an infinite *growth* of the *same* subject. So LEIBNIZ's demonstration in ** seems a *petitio principii*, as from the very outset, we have conceived the world not as an individual entity but as an aggregate of entities, and from this pre-conception we drew the conclusion that the world is not an individual entity (so it cannot be the substrate of a soul). The dialectical difficulty seems to be the equivocal use of the term *substantia*, which in *<a>* refers to a complete substance, a composite of body and soul, while in ** refers to the body alone.

The alternative interpretation that *mundus* in *<a>* refers to the world as the *mundus intelligibilis* of the monads, whereas in **, to the *mundus phaenomenalis*, the physical world of bodies, seems unconvincing in that: (1) there is nothing in the text itself that would explicitly express this differentiation; and because, (2) in Leibnizian metaphysics, the number of the monads may not be said to be finite. Since God continuously produces them in His *fulgurations*,⁶⁶ their number must be indeterminate rather than finite. Therefore, it looks probable that *mundus* in both cases refers to the material (phenomenal) universe.

In the context of our study, it has some importance to see that the Leibnizian theory of substance does *not* make it directly impossible that the material world as a whole has a soul that is not identical with God. For the monads, teaches LEIBNIZ, are not equal in rank. The ideal composite substance, namely, man, contains in itself, as the mirror of the universe, an infinity of lower monads (“*tout va à l’infini dans la nature*”)⁶⁷ under the hegemony of one dominating monad, namely, the individual human soul attached to its particular body. As LEIBNIZ put it in an originally untitled text written between approximately 1712–1714, and which has been called *<La Monadologie>*:

70. Each living body has a dominant entelechy. In the animal this is the soul. The members of this living body are full of other living beings – plants, animals – each of which has also its dominant entelechy or soul.⁶⁸

This does not presuppose, implies LEIBNIZ, the *substantial identity* of all the monads contained in the material part of a composite substance, i.e., of a living being: the subordinate monads continue to be ontologically independent

⁶⁶cf. *<La Monadologie>*, § 47: “Ainsi Dieu seul est l’Unité primitive, ou la substance simple originaire, dont toutes les Monades créées ou derivatives sont des productions, et naissent, pour ainsi dire, par des Fulgurations continues de la Divinité de moment à moment, bornées par la réceptivité de la creature, à laquelle il est essentiel d’être limitée.” (GERHARDT ed., 1965, vol. VI, p. 614.)

⁶⁷*Principes de la Nature et de la Grace, fondés en raison*, point 6; GERHARDT, C. I., 1965 vol. VI, p. 601.

⁶⁸“70. On voit par là, que chaque corps vivant a une Entelechie dominante qui est l’Ame dans l’animal; mais les membres de ce corps vivant sont pleins d’autres vivans, plantes, animaux, dont chacun a encor son Entelechie ou son ame dominante.” (GERHARDT, C. I., 1965, vol. VI, p. 619. English translation by H. W. CARR, p. 117.) See also the discussion of this question in GURWITSCH, pp. 196–198.

substances, so the danger of Spinozism is avoided. As he writes in the second part of the *Theodicy*:

200. ... *The connection and order of things entails that the body of each animal and plant is composed of other animals and plants or other living and organic things; and consequently, there is subordination, in so far as one body, one substance serves the other, so that their respective degrees of perfection can not be equal.*⁶⁹

Thus, if all real substances are to be conceived on the analogy of the living being, then by applying this analogy on the macrocosm, it would be at least possible to regard the universe as a composite substance containing an infinite amount of lower-ranking monads under the coordinating principle of an *anima mundi*. This theoretical possibility does not demand that we leave the bounds of LEIBNIZ'S doctrine of substance.

Hence, the rejection in *b*) of the substantial unity of the world does not seem an apodictical argument, and the philosophical motifs for the Leibnizian thesis *Deum non esse animam mundi* are to be found elsewhere. We believe the fundamental discrepancy LEIBNIZ perceives between the concept of God and that of an *anima mundi* is between the *intramundane* localization of the world soul, and the *extramundane* character of the Absolute Being, whom he conceives as the condition or cause of all reality and existence. The world soul is an *intramundane* being inasmuch as it is the substantial form and principle of life of the material cosmos, i.e., the phenomenal world conceived as an organic sympathetic whole. God, on the other hand, is, in a sense, above (*superius*) both the intelligible world of the monads (*regnum gratiae*) and the phenomenal world of nature (*regnum naturae*) because, ultimately, these two are perfectly connected within the system of pre-established harmony, in which the two levels of existence constitute one *order* of existence (*catena statuum, series rerum*), while God is the author of them all.⁷⁰

Hence, the contradiction in the Leibnizian system between the concept of God and that of the world soul is an indissoluble one; and, yet, it does not directly destroy the concept of the *anima mundi* in itself. However, LEIBNIZ does not assert positively the

⁶⁹"200. ... *La liaison et l'ordre des choses fait que le corps de tout animal et de toute plante est composé d'autres animaux et d'autres plantes, ou d'autres vivans et organiques; et que par conséquent il y ait de la subordination, et qu'un corps, une substance serve à l'autre: ainsi leur perfection ne saurait être égale.*" (*Essais de Théodicée sur la bonté de Dieu, la liberté de l'homme et l'origine du mal*, II/200; GERHARDT, C. I., 1965, vol. VI, p. 235. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) LEIBNIZ expounds the same doctrine about the multiplicity, and the ontological independence, of lower substances within a higher organism in a letter to ARNAULD (9 Oct. 1687) as well: "...l'homme, qui est un être doué d'une véritable unité que son âme lui donne, nonobstant que la masse de son corps est divisée en organes, vases, humeurs, esprits; et que les parties sont pleines sans doute d'une infinité d'autres substances corporelles douées de leurs propres formes." (ed. LE ROY, p. 187.) Similarly in a letter to J. BERNOULLI (? 1698): "*Etsi autem corpus animalis, vel meum organicum, rursus ex substantiis innumeris componatur, eae tamen partes animalis vel mei non sunt.*" (GERHARDT, C. I., 1971, vol. III/2, p. 537.)

⁷⁰This argumentation relies first and foremost on the *Discours de Métaphysique*, *De rerum originatione radicali*, and *La Monadologie*.

existence of a world soul either; we might say that he philosophically *tolerates* the concept of such a soul. The same could be affirmed in respect of our last Leibnizian text, the *Considerations sur la doctrine d'un Esprit Universel Unique*.

5 *Leibniz's Toleration of the Nominal Identification of a Universal Spirit with the World Soul. His Arguments Against the Identification of God with the Totality of All Finite Spirits: Considerations sur la Doctrine d'un Esprit Universel Unique. PLOTINUS' Arguments in Favour of the Identification of the World Soul with the Totality of All Finite Spirits: Enneads IV/2 & 9*

As we mentioned in [Section 1](#) of Chapter 2, the *Considerations sur la doctrine d'un Esprit Universel Unique* of 1702 come to grips with several different concepts under the heading 'universal spirit'. At the very beginning of his text, LEIBNIZ gives three possible interpretations of the term '*Esprit Universel*': this is either (1) the unitary vivifying substantial principle of the natural universe and of all human souls, the "*ames particulieres*"; or (2) the *intellectus agens communis unicus* posited by IBN ROSHD; or, again, (3) the Spinozistic single unitary substance, *une seule substance*. In other words, he gives three *prima facie* very different philosophical conceptions⁷¹:

(1) *Several ingenious people believed and believe even today that there is only one Spirit, which is universal and animates the entire universe and all its parts, all of them according to their respective structures and the organs it finds in them, just like a single gust of air sounds the different organ-pipes in several different manners. And that, in this way, when*

⁷¹In [Section 1](#) of Chapter 2, we promised to cite the passage dealing with the world soul from LEIBNIZ'S 1707 letter to HANSCH (*Epistola ad Hanschium de philosophia Platonica*). As we pointed out there, LEIBNIZ in this epistle formally presents the relevant, ancient and modern hypotheses in a manner similar to that of the 1702 *Considerations*, but does not analyze them philosophically. In point VI of the letter, LEIBNIZ discusses the concept of beatitude, which he identifies with that of a union with God. He warns in point VII that this union does not entail the absorption of the individual soul in God, and it is along this line of thought that he comes to the world soul theories: "*Beatitudo animae consistit, utique in unione cum Deo, modo non putemus, absorberi animam in Deum, proprietate, et quae substantiam propriam sola facit, actione amissa, qui malus fuerit ἐνθουσιασμός, neque expetenda Deificatio. Nempe quidam veterum recentiorumque statuerunt, Deum esse Spiritum, toto universo diffusum, qui ubi in corpus organicum incidat, animet illud, perinde ac ventus modos musicos in fistulis organorum producit. Fortasse ab ea sententia Stoici non abhorrebant, et huc redibat Intellectus agens Averroistarum, atque ipsius fortasse Aristotelis, in omnibus hominibus idem. Ita morte redibant animae in Deum, ut in oceanum rivi. ... Spinoza aliter eodem tendebat; ei una substantia est, Deus; creaturae ejus modificationes, ut figurae in cera continuae per motum nascentes et pereuntes. Ita ipsi, perinde ut Almerico, anima non superest, nisi per suum Esse ideale in Deo, ut ibi ab aeterno fuit.*" (ERDMANN ed., text № LXIV, pp. 446–447. At the beginning of line 4 of the citation, the ERDMANN text has *diffusam*, a mistaken reading.) LEIBNIZ here uses the same image of one wind blowing in many organ-pipes, and of one ocean receiving many rivers, as in the *Considerations sur la doctrine d'un Esprit Universel Unique*.

the organs of a living being are well disposed, this universal spirit operates as an individual soul in it but when its organs have decomposed, this individual soul is either reduced to nothing or, to put it this way, returns to the ocean of the universal spirit.

⟨2⟩ *It has seemed to several people that Aristotle had entertained a like opinion, which was rehased by Averroes, the famous Arabic philosopher. He believed that there is in us an intellectus agens, i.e., an active intellect as well as an intellectus patiens, i.e., a passive intellect, and that the first, as it arrives from without the soul, is eternal and universal in all of us, whereas the passive intellect, being particular in each of us, moves away from us at the moment of our death...*

⟨3⟩ *Spinoza, who admits one substance only, is not far away from the doctrine of the unique universal spirit...*⁷²

The philosophical thesis these three conceptions of an *esprit universel seul* have in common is the *unicity of* (a particular kind of) *spiritual substance*, which is in every hypothesis vested with the capacity of reason. In particular, ⟨1⟩ asserts the absolute unicity of all kinds of soul (human, animal, vegetative), while ⟨2⟩ only that of the highest-ranking part of the human soul: the active intellect. In ⟨3⟩, we can perhaps recognize a reference to J. G. WACHTER's interpretation of Spinozism. WACHTER (see Section 6 of Chapter 7 *infra*), suggested in *caput IV/ix* of his *Elucidarius Cabalisticus* (1706), a book LEIBNIZ carefully read and annotated,⁷³ that the substance SPINOZA posited is actually not a single substance expressed by an infinity of attributes, but *spiritual substance* with the two attributes of extension and cogitation: “Hence, according to Spinoza, the substance of the entire universe is spirit, and this spirit has two attributes, cogitation and extension, and these attributes have two modes, mind and body.”⁷⁴ LEIBNIZ

⁷²“(1) Plusieurs personnes ingénieuses ont crû et croyent encor aujourd’huy qu’il n’y a qu’un seul Esprit, qui est Universel, et qui anime tout l’univers et toutes ses parties, chacune suivant sa structure et suivant les organes qu’il trouve, comme un même souffle de vent fait sonner differemment divers tuyaux d’orgue. Et qu’ainsi lorsqu’un animal a ses organes bien disposés, il y fait l’effect d’une ame particuliere, mais lorsque les organes sont corrompus, cette ame particuliere revient à rien ou retourne pour ainsi dire dans l’océan de l’esprit universel. (2) Aristote a paru à plusieurs d’une opinion approchante, qui a esté renouvelée par Averroes, celebre philosophe Arabe. Il croyoit, qu’il y avoit en nous un intellectus agens, ou entendement actif, et aussi un intellectus patiens ou entendement passif; que le premier, venant au dehors (perhaps du dehors?), estoit eternel et universel pour tous, mais que l’entendement passif, particulier à chacun, s’éloignoit dans la mort de l’homme. ... (3) Spinosa, qui n’admet qu’une seule substance ne s’éloigne pas beaucoup de la doctrine de l’esprit universel unique...” (GERHARDT ed., 1965, vol. VI, pp. 529–530. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

⁷³*Animadversiones ad Joh. Georg. Wachteri librum de recondita Hebraeorum philosophia*, manuscript appr. of 1706–1710, in Hannover (essentially a very short-spoken criticism of SPINOZA's several different concepts and doctrines); bilingual (Latin-French) ed. with long introduction by FOUCHER DE CAREIL (see bibliography under this name). On LEIBNIZ's use of WACHTER's book in respect of the universal soul, see *infra*, Section 7 of Chapter 7.

⁷⁴“Est igitur omnino universorum substantia spiritus juxta Spinozam, hujusque Spiritus duo sunt attributa, cogitatio & extensio, horumque attributorum duo modi, mens & Corpus.” (WACHTER, p. 47.) Cf. further “Nulla igitur juxta Spinozam in universo Materia est, sed quidquid est, res funditus praesentissima est... Erit ergo universorum Substantia juxta Spinozam Spiritus... (SPINOZA) hunc animo fovit conceptum, Extensionem rem aequae Spiritualem esse ac cogitationem.” (*Ibid.*, pp. 46–47.)

probably opposed, but was at least informed about, this interpretation of Spinozism, while he certainly rejected it as a philosophical thesis.⁷⁵ Whichever interpretation of SPINOZA he had in mind in ⟨3⟩, then, he thought of the unicity of spiritual substance, which has the attribute of reason, when he used the term *Esprit Universel seul* in these introductory passages. At this point of the text, however, he left undetermined whether or not the substance of God is included in this unique spiritual substance.

That this unitary *spiritual* substance is further described here as a vivifying, *animating* principle is not paradoxical. In [Section 2](#), we saw that for LEIBNIZ, each higher form of life includes in itself the attributes of the preceding degrees; so *esprit* (*mens*, mind) is *ame plus raison* (the intellectual capacities). Put differently, there is no contradiction in the terms here: a ‘spirit’ is a combination of the animating principle and reason.

Hence, this Leibnizian *esprit unique* is a unitary spiritual substance which contains the principles of life and cogitation of all, or only of the higher, living beings. But on what account will such a spirit be *universal*? We may first remember that the Latin equivalents of the term *esprit universel* (i.e., *spiritus universi* and *spiritus mundi*) occurred already in STURM’s *Idolum naturae* (cf. [Section 1](#)). In the passages cited above, the unique spirit is *universal* in the same sense as in STURM’s text, on account of its being the animating principle of the physical universe as a whole. The *esprit universel unique* is thus the unitary spiritual substance which contains the principles of life and cogitation of all beings living in a world that is conceived to constitute a whole.

LEIBNIZ’s philosophical concern, as we have indicated under [Section 1](#) of Chapter 2, revolves around the question of whether a universal spirit could be the *unique* spirit that there exists in the world:

The doctrine of a universal spirit is good in itself, in so far as everyone who has endorsed it admits, indeed, the existence of the Divinity, (a) either because they believe that this universal spirit is supreme and then they think that it is identical with God Himself, (b) or because they believe, together with the Cabbalists, that God created it, which was the opinion of the English Henry More as well and of some other recent philosophers, namely, of certain chemists, who held that there is a universal archeus or a soul of the world, and some of them asserted that it is the Spirit of the Lord which moved upon the face of the waters, which is mentioned at the beginning of the Book of Genesis.

⟨c⟩ *But when people go further than this and say that this universal spirit is the unique spirit and that there are no individual souls nor spirits or, at least, that the individual souls*

⁷⁵LEIBNIZ in his notes on the above-cited passage does not so much question the validity of WACHTER’s interpretation of SPINOZA, as he philosophically combats the thesis itself: “Auctor ⟨scil. WACHTER⟩ putat Spinosam naturam communem assumisise, cui insint attributa cogitatio et extensio et eam esse Spiritum, sed nulla est spirituum extensio nisi sumas latius pro quodam animali subtili ut angeli a veteribus accipiebantur. Addit auctor modos horum attributorum esse mentem et corpus. Sed qui quaeso, mens potest esse modus cogitationis cum sit cogitationis principium?” (Ed. FOUCHER DE CAREIL, pp. 32–34.)

will cease to exist, then, I believe, they go out of the bounds of reason and put forward an unfounded doctrine, of which we do not even have a distinct idea.⁷⁶

On reading ⟨a⟩, we may recall that, as we pointed out in Section 1, STURM, too, allows for the nominal identification of God with an immaterial *spiritus mundi*, provided that this spirit is conceived not as a part (i.e., the soul) of, but as the protector (*praeses*), Creator (*opifex*) and governor (*rector*) of the material universe. Such a mind or reason, now affirms LEIBNIZ as well, could be nominally identified with God, in which case it is the only monad that does not inform a body: the Highest Monad is the only *substantia a materia separata*. God would thus be named as the *Esprit Universel supreme* (*spiritus universalis supremus*), which is not an unusual designation for God.

In ⟨b⟩, LEIBNIZ asserts, despite what he said in *De ipsa natura*, that it is philosophically still acceptable to conceive of a created *esprit universel* in the fashion of the *principium hylarchicum* of HENRY MORE, i.e., more or less in the manner of an *ame du monde*.⁷⁷ Though on account of LESSING's oral statement about the world soul we shall briefly mention MORE's anti-Cartesian idea of a 'universal spirit or soul of nature' as it is expounded in *The Immortality of the Soul* (cf. Section 12 of Chapter 7 *infra*), it seems important, for the interpretation of LEIBNIZ's point in the above citation, to offer a short philosophical characterization of MORE's *principium hylarchicum* already here. MORE, in the *Enchiridion Metaphysicum* (published in the *Opera omnia*, London 1679), experimentally evidenced the existence of a created incorporeal ubiquitous substance, whereby he explained some supra-mechanical general laws of nature regulating locomotion and the union of bodies (i.e., cohesion, growth and the phenomena of life), which, he said, could not be attributed to bare

⁷⁶“La doctrine d'un Esprit Universel est bonne en elle même, car tous ceux qui l'enseignent, admettent en effect l'existence de la Divinité, ⟨a⟩ soit qu'ils croyent que cet Esprit Universel est supreme, car alors ils tiennent que c'est Dieu même, ⟨b⟩ soit qu'ils croyent avec les Cabalistes que Dieu l'a créé, qui estoit aussi l'opinion de Henri Morus Anglois et de quelques autres nouveaux philosophes et particulièrement de certains Chymistes, qui ont crû, qu'il y a un Archée Universel ou bien une ame du monde, et quelques uns ont soutenu, que c'est l'esprit du Seigneur, qui se remuoit sur les eaux, dont parle le Commencement de la Genese. ⟨c⟩ Mais lorsqu'on va jusqu'à dire que cet Esprit Universel est l'esprit unique, et qu'il n'y a point d'ames ou esprits particuliers ou du moins que ces ames cessent de subsister, je crois qu'on passe les bornes de la raison, et qu'on avance sans fondement une doctrine, dont on n'a pas même de notion distincte.” (LEIBNIZ: *Considerations sur la doctrine d'un Esprit Universel Unique*; GERHARDT, C. I., 1965, vol. VI, pp. 530–531. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting added.)

⁷⁷LEIBNIZ explicitly uses the expression “*principium hylarchicum Henrici Mori*” in the *De ipsa natura* (point 2). MORE himself uses alternatively and indistinctively the terms *spiritus naturae*, *principium hylarchicum* and *spiritus hylostaticus* to denote this entity in the *Enchiridion Metaphysicum*, while he explicitly identifies the *spirit of nature* with the *world soul* in *The Immortality of the Soul*.

matter.⁷⁸ The important point for LEIBNIZ in this case was that, on the one hand, MORE did *not* identify this spirit of nature with the distributive unity of all human souls, since he considered it as “*a brute and insensate thing, as it were, devoid of all reason, counsel, and free will*”,⁷⁹ in short, as an entity divested of some of the essential attributes of higher souls. Another reason for LEIBNIZ to tolerate MORE’s idea (at least here) was that the *spiritus naturae*, this principle of supra-mechanical natural change, was seen as created by and subordinate to God in MORE’s hierarchical system of spiritual substances.⁸⁰

Still, in (b), LEIBNIZ seems not to reject the possibility that a hypothetical *ame du monde* may be nominally identified with the Spirit of the Lord as described in *Genesis* I:2. A careful parsing would suggest that the demonstrative *ce* in the clause beginning with “*et quelques uns ont soutenu...*” refers back immediately to the term *l’Esprit Universel*.⁸¹ In this case, LEIBNIZ is suggesting that it is not unacceptable if the Holy Spirit, the spirit of the Lord, is conceived as a universal spirit. It seems at the same time that he is not proposing that the Holy Spirit seen as the universal *spirit* is, or may be thought as, the world *soul* as well.⁸²

⁷⁸MORE gives a full description of the *spiritus naturae/principium hylarchicum* in the *scholion* to Chapter 28, Section 21 of the *Enchiridion Metaphysicum*, as follows: “...*Spiritus Naturae (...) est substantia incorporea, vita saltem si non sensu quodam obscuriori praedita, generales motuum ac unionum partium Mundanae Materiae naturalis leges, omniumque corporum naturalium Ideas seu Rationes Plasticas vitaliter in se complectens, & secundum istas rationes seu Ideas pro data occasione in Materiae Mundanae partes agens, quo totius Mundi Materialis compages ac ordo rerumque singularum corporearum species ac formae conservantur ac propagantur. Ex qua descriptione intelligere licet Spiritum hunc Naturae quasi omniformem ubique esse, id est, Omnes rerum corporearum rationes Plasticas omnesque earum gradus, inchoationes, incrementa & consummationes in se ubique vitaliter continere. Et quemadmodum Anima nostra, pro re nata, varia profert Phantasmata, ita & hunc spiritum data occasione varia inchoare Plasmata, & cum idem sit ubique, ut qui ubique est omniformis, (...) inchoata paulatim perficere. Ex quo porro constare potest unicum esse Naturae Spiritum, singulasque Mundi partes singulis non indigere.*” (MORE, vol. II/1, p. 329.)

⁷⁹“*rem quasi brutam & insensatam, omnique ratione, consilio & arbitrii libertate destitutam*” (MORE, *scholion* to Chapter 28, Section 21 of the *Enchiridion Metaphysicum*, *ibid.* Transl. by A. JACOB, 1995, p. 139.)

⁸⁰For a summary of MORE’s, CUDWORTH’s and BURTHOGGE’s respective philosophical views concerning the world soul, see the slightly ironical but compendious chapter “*L’«Esprit de nature»*” in HUTIN, pp. 127–133.

⁸¹One would expect ‘...*et de quelques uns qui ont soutenu...*’ if this clause were subordinated to the first part of the sentence (repetition of the preposition *de* is obligatory in French). Thus formulated, the relevant clause stands in loose parataxis, so the semantic qualification of the first part of the sentence that the universal spirit is a *created* entity does no longer apply in the second part.

⁸²On medieval theories about the possible identification of the Holy Spirit with the world soul, or the parallelism between them, see GREGORY, Chapter III (“*L’anima del mondo e l’anima individuale*”), pp. 123–174. Of particular interest are pp. 136–149, which concern the respective ideas of ABÉLARD and GUILLAUME DE CONCHES. – On the related ideas of ABÉLARD, and the school of Chartres, respectively, see further SCHLETTE, Chapter I/2/ii (“*Zu den Auseinandersetzungen im 12. Jahrhundert*”), esp. pp. 133–145. On Giordano BRUNO’s similar idea, see our Section 1 of Chapter 8.

In any case, section (b) of the above citation clearly admits of the *anima mundi* as a created entity. But as far as the Leibnizian concept of substance is concerned, a problem may arise from this philosophical indulgence, which LEIBNIZ seldom displays in other texts, towards the *anima mundi* theory. Namely, as soon as a soul is considered to be the soul of the world, *ame du monde*, it will appear, within the bounds of Leibnizian metaphysics, as a monad attributed by God to a particular body, since God, the condition of existence, is the only monad without a body. Hence, a soul of the world, in Leibnizian terms, should inform the material universe in the same manner as a human soul informs a human body: its internal representations have to be in perfect pre-established harmony with its external relations and actions. In other words, it should be in an ideal (not real) commerce with the body, in a *commercium ideale animae cum corpore* or better, in no commerce, only in concord (*in nullo commercio, sed tantum consensu*), without any *influxus physicus* between body and soul.⁸³ However, the body of a hypothetical *ame du monde* is not a common particular body, but that of the universe, which cannot be conceived to represent anything external to it – there *is* nothing external to it. This entails that the world soul cannot be thought on the analogy of the human soul. This is a philosophical difficulty which may have escaped LEIBNIZ's attention (though not that of WOLFF, see § 15) because he was after a different problem, put forward in (c).

His attention goes here to a third possible interpretation of the concept of *esprit universel*, which he does want to destroy. In (c), the hypothetical universal spirit is constituted by the distributive unity of all *created* individual spirits, i.e., rational or human souls, the *esprits particuliers* or *ames particulieres* (LEIBNIZ does not consider the class of *genii* here). A universal spirit thus conceived has nothing to do with an *anima nobilior mundi* any more: it is not necessarily correlated with the material universe as its body (or, at least, LEIBNIZ is reticent on this). Instead, it is the *unique* universal spirit, *l'esprit universel unique*. To posit the existence of such a comprehensive spiritual entity would destroy the substantiality of the particular human souls with devastating consequences to morality and, hence, to religion.

But before we consider the Leibnizian criticism of hypothesis (c), we have to point out that LEIBNIZ investigates only that particular version of this theory in which God as an *esprit universel unique* would be constituted by the totality of the human spirits. His treatment of the concept '*esprit universel*' is not exhaustive in

⁸³Cf. (Discours de métaphysique), § XXXIII: "Or rien ne fait comprendre plus fortement l'immortalité que cette indépendance et cette étendue de l'ame, qui la met absolument à couvert de toutes les choses extérieures, puisqu'elle seule fait tout son monde, et se suffit avec Dieu; ... aussi n'est-il pas possible que les changemens de cette masse étendue qui est appelée nostre corps, fassent rien sur l'ame, ny que la dissipation de ce corps détruise ce qui est indivisible." (GERHARDT ed., 1965, vol. IV, p. 458; cf. also § XII.) Cf. also (La Monadologie), §§ 11 & 17; and Systeme nouveau de la nature..., in especial, GERHARDT ed., 1965, vol. IV, p. 484.

that he considers the following three cases only (cf. sections ⟨a⟩, ⟨b⟩ and ⟨c⟩ of the citation in the main text above):

⟨a⟩ the *esprit universel* is nominally identified with God; there is no soul of the world; the individual human souls do not constitute any kind of substantial unit either with God or among themselves;

⟨b⟩ there is God; the *esprit universel* is nominally identified with an *ame du monde* created by and subordinate to God; the individual human souls do not constitute any kind of substantial unit either with God or the *ame du monde*, or among themselves;

⟨c⟩ God as the *esprit universel unique* is effectively identified with the totality of the individual human souls, which therefore do constitute a substantial unit with Him; whether this *esprit universel unique* is also the *ame du monde* is explicitly not determined.

Logically, however, there should be at least a fourth case as well:

⟨d⟩ there is God; the *esprit universel unique* is nominally identified with an *ame du monde* created by and subordinate to God, while the individual human souls constitute a single substantial unit with it (broadly speaking, PLOTINUS's solution).

We are going to examine this fourth interpretational possibility below, but we have to be aware that, for LEIBNIZ, it does not exist. He gives an example of version ⟨c⟩, the one he is not ready to put up with philosophically, in the following terms:

*And if one fancies that the universal spirit is like an ocean formed by an infinite number of water-drops, which quit it when they animate some particular organic body but return to it after the organs of the body have decomposed, one conceives of a materialistic and coarse idea, which does not correspond to the thing in question and is entangled in the same difficulties as the simile of the gust of air. Because as the ocean is a certain number of water-drops, so God would be, to put it this way, a collection of all the souls, more or less in the same manner as a swarm of bees is a collection of these tiny animals. But just like this swarm is, in itself, no genuine substance, it is clear that in this manner, the universal spirit would not be a genuine entity in itself. Instead of saying that it is the unique spirit, we should say that it is absolutely nothing in itself, and that in nature, there are only individual souls, which this universal spirit would be the collection of.*⁸⁴

LEIBNIZ's argument against this hypothesis departs from the concept of God as the infinite substance. Any kind of substance has to have a principle of unity which ensures that it is numerically one. But God conceived as an inorganic multitude

⁸⁴“*Et si on s'imagine, que l'Esprit Universel est comme un Ocean composé d'une infinité de gouttes, qui en sont détachées quand elles animent quelque corps organique particulier, mais qu'elles se reunissent à leur Ocean apres la destruction des organes, on se forme encor une idée materielle et grossiere, qui ne convient point à la chose et s'embarrasse dans les mêmes difficultés que celle du souffle (considered by LEIBNIZ in the previous paragraph). Car comme l'ocean est un amas des gouttes, Dieu seroit pour ainsi {dire} un assemblage de toutes les ames, à peu pres de la même maniere, qu'un Essaim d'abeilles est un assemblage de ces petits animaux, mais comme cette essaïm n'est pas luy même une veritable substance, il est clair, que de cette maniere l'esprit universel ne seroit point un Estre veritable luy même, et au lieu de dire, qu'il est le seul esprit, il faudroit dire, qu'il n'est rien du tout en soy, et qu'il n'y a dans la nature que les ames particulieres, dont il seroit l'amas.*” (*Considerations sur la doctrine d'un Esprit Universel Unique*; GERHARDT ed., 1965, vol. VI, pp. 535–536. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

(*grex, exercitus, massa*) of individual substances will not have such a unity, so God will not be a true substance. As LEIBNIZ expressed this principle in a letter to J. BERNOULLI (1698?), “secondary matter, i.e., a mass is not one substance but a certain amount of substances; hence, it is not the herd but the individual animal, not the fish-pond but the individual fish that is one substance.”⁸⁵ God conceived as the unique universal spirit cannot be the distributive unity of all finite souls, a non-substance.

LEIBNIZ corroborates this argument from the notion of substance, against the real identification of God with the totality of finite souls, by dint of a biological proof: clearly, one precondition on which the existence of a *unique universal spirit* thus conceived stands or falls is that individual spirits cannot be definitively correlated with a material body which they inform. So LEIBNIZ confutes ⟨c⟩ also by pointing out, with biological arguments (observations with the microscope and the theory of animate seed), that ‘the soul always keeps a subtle body’.⁸⁶ The body correlated with a particular soul is, for LEIBNIZ, the principle of identity, without which the kingdom of final causes (where the souls enjoy a sort of community with God) would not be possible. Thus, we might say that while the monad, this metaphysical point, is the principle of the substantial unity of a piece of organic or inorganic matter (hence, also a secondary cause of its reality), a piece of matter correlated with an individual soul is, conversely, also the principle of identity for this soul. The body is *the* principle of identification by virtue of which moral responsibility may be attributed to a specific higher soul, an *anima nobilior*, i.e., a *mens*. Therefore, even in the City of God, it is by dint of the glorified body of the resurrected that they are identified so they can receive personalized reward or punishment:

...it is more reasonable and in keeping with the manner in which nature operates to let the souls reside in the living beings themselves and not outside them, in God, and in this way, to safeguard not only the soul but also the living being, as I have explained above and elsewhere; and consequently, to let the individual souls be on guard, i.e., in the particular (bodily) functions which they perform and which contribute to the beauty and the order of the universe, instead of reducing them to a sabbatical in God, according to the quietists' idea, i.e., to a condition of idleness and uselessness. Because the beatific vision of the saved souls is compatible with the functioning of their glorified bodies, which will continue to be organic in their own manner.⁸⁷

⁸⁵“*Materia secunda, seu Massa, non est substantia, sed substantiae; ita non grex, sed animal, non piscina, sed piscis, substantia una est.*” (GERHARDT ed., 1971, III/2, p. 537. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, underlining added.) Note that LEIBNIZ is not using consequently the expression *materia secunda*, which in his letter to R. Ch. WAGNER (4 June 1710) is used with reference to the complete substance, i.e., body (*corpus*) having an *entelechia prima*.

⁸⁶‘*L’ame garde toujours un corps subtil*’, in *Considerations sur la doctrine d’un Esprit Universel Unique*; GERHARDT ed., 1965, vol. VI, p. 533 (not a literal citation).

⁸⁷“...il est plus raisonnable et plus conforme à l’usage de la nature de laisser subsister les ames particulieres dans les animaux mêmes et non pas au dehors en Dieu, et ainsi de conserver non seulement l’ame, mais encor l’animal, comme j’ay expliqué cy dessus et ailleurs; et de laisser ainsi les ames particulieres demeurer toujours en faction, c’est à dire dans des fonctions particulieres qui leur conviennent et qui contribuent à la beauté et à l’ordre de l’univers, au lieu de les reduire au sabbat des Quietistes en Dieu, c’est à dire à un estat de faineantise et d’inutilité. Car quant à la vision béatifique des ames bien heureuses, elle est compatible avec les fonctions de leurs corps glorifiés, qui ne laisseront pas d’estre organiques à leur maniere.” (*Ibid.*; p. 536. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

The respective arguments from the concept of substance, and from biology, against the identification of God with the totality of all human souls are accompanied in this text by a traditional psychological argument against the actual substantial identity of every human soul in general. Here LEIBNIZ considers and rejects the extreme realist thesis that two persons, even in their this-worldly life, have the numerically same soul, while each of them is differently affected by the same object. If the numerical identity of all finite intelligent substances is impossible because experience contradicts it, then it is *a fortiori* impossible too that they could constitute a substantial unity which is identified with God:

But if someone wants to maintain that there are absolutely no individual souls, not even in our present condition when sensation and cogitation take place by virtue of the bodily organs, he will be refuted by our experience which teaches us, so it seems to me, that each of us is an individual thing which thinks, perceives, wants and that each of us is distinguished from another person who thinks, and wants something else. Otherwise, we shall side with Spinoza or other similar authors who suggest that there is only one substance – namely, God – which thinks of, believes and wants one thing in me but thinks of, believes and wants exactly the opposite in another person. Mr Bayle has shown the absurdity of this opinion in some passages of his Dictionary.⁸⁸

But the argument for the substantial identity of all human souls is, perhaps, not so ridiculous, for it seems defensible in the version PLOTINUS propounds.⁸⁹ The Plotinian version, apparently neglected by LEIBNIZ, is, however, essentially different in that it identifies the numerical unity of all human souls not with God, but with the world soul, ἡ ψυχή τοῦ παντός. This is the theoretical possibility we denoted under point <d> above.

The theoretical necessity for PLOTINUS to posit a soul of the universe, ψυχή τοῦ παντός arises from his perception of the cosmos as a unified *whole* (ἐν τῷ πᾶν), and of the fundamental sympathy between individual soul and individual soul, on the one hand, and between individual soul and the universe, on the other (συμπάσχειν, συναλγεῖν). LEIBNIZ, naturally, has his own theory of *harmonia praestabilita* to account for the harmonious cooperation of all finite substances in the world, which he conceives not as a whole but as an *aggregate* of wholes perfectly coordinated by the extramundane omnipotent being.

⁸⁸“Mais si quelqu’un veut soutenir, qu’il n’y a point d’ames particulieres du tout, pas même maintenant, lors que la fonction du sentiment et de la pensée se fait avec l’aide des organes, il sera réfuté par nostre experience, qui nous enseigne, ce me semble, que nous sommes quelque chose en nostre particulier, qui pense, qui s’apperçoit, qui veut, et que nous sommes distingués d’un autre qui pense, et qui veut autre chose. Autrement on tombe dans le sentiment de Spinoza, ou de quelques auteurs semblables, qui veulent qu’il n’y a qu’une seule substance, savoir Dieu, qui pense, croit et veut l’un en moy, mais qui pense, croit et veut tout le contraire dans un autre, opinion, dont M. Bayle a fait sentir le ridicule en quelques endroits de son Dictionnaire.” (*Ibid.*; pp. 536–537. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

⁸⁹Cf. the relatively early treatise Περὶ τοῦ εἶ παῖσαι αἱ ψυχαὶ μία (“On whether all souls are one”), 8 (IV 9), section 1, lines 15–19. PLOTINUS’ works are cited from the *editio maior* of HENRY & SCHWYZER (see bibliography).

The early PLOTINUS advances a weighty argument in favour of the substantial identity of every human soul, and for their identification with the universal soul: it is *not* necessary that two persons experience the same perceptions or states of mind at the same time, even if the numerically same soul is present in their respective bodies because, he argues, we could logically expect this only if their *bodies* also were the same.⁹⁰ Hence, the metaphysical constitution of the soul in general is characterized by PLOTINUS as *unity* paired with *diversity*: even the individual soul is so made that it does not feel in the left hand what it feels in the right. Therefore, in fact, we should *a fortiori* expect a similar situation when we have the numerically *same* soul, in two or more *separate* bodies. That the individual soul does not feel the local affection of one part of the body attributed to it in another (or every other) part of that body as well is thus due to the particular metaphysical constitution of the soul, namely, that it is one and many at the same time, as PLOTINUS suggests.⁹¹ In a final analysis, then, the definition of soul as *substantia simplex* would appear insufficient in the eyes of PLOTINUS, if it is to imply, as it does for LEIBNIZ, the indivisibility of the soul because soul is, if we may formulate this comparison, like number.⁹² In other words, the individual soul, both in itself and in its relation to the world soul is shown by PLOTINUS to belong to a distinct *species* of reality vested with complex and apparently self-contradictory specific differences (divisibility *and* indivisibility).

Returning now to LEIBNIZ's *Considerations sur la doctrine d'un Esprit Universel Unique*, it is to assert something evident to say that the main philosophical objective of this text is the defence of the "*doctrine of individual souls*" ("*doctrine des ames particulieres*"),⁹³ and of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. The souls and the substantial forms analogous to them are complementary or secondary principles of reality in that they are subservient to (created, sustained and coordinated by) God. Being the principles of numerical unity, they are the proximate causes of the existence of the compound substances (whatever is not an informed unit is a *non ens*) and, thereby, also of the (phenomenal and intelligible) world as an aggregate of such

⁹⁰The identity of soul does not entail the identity of the two bodies involved: "Πρώτον μὲν οὐκ οὐκ, εἰ ἡ ψυχὴ μία ἢ ἐμὴ καὶ ἡ ἀλλοῦ, ἢ ἄλλου, ἢ ἄλλου, καὶ τὸ συναμφοτέρων τῶν συναμφοτέρων ταυτόν." ("Therefore, first, it is not the case that, if my soul and someone else's soul are one, then even the one body-soul composite is identical with the other body-soul composite.") *Ibid.*, section 2, lines 1-2; eds. HENRY & SCHWYZER, p. 253.

⁹¹Cf. the early treatise *Περὶ οὐσίας ψυχῆς α'* ("On the essence of soul, 1"), 4 (IV 2) section 1, lines 64–67 (eds. HENRY & SCHWYZER, p. 6): "...ἀλλὰ μεριστὴ μὲν, ὅτι ἐν πᾶσι μέρεσι τοῦ ἐν ᾧ ἐστίν, ἀμεριστος δὲ, ὅτι ὅλη ἐν πᾶσι καὶ ἐν ὅσων αὐτῶν ὅλη." ("...but, on the one hand, it is divisible because it is in every part of the thing in which it is, while, on the other, it is indivisible, because it is entire in the totality of the parts and it is entire in each single one of them"; the doctrine of *ungeteilte Teilung*.)

⁹²In any true equation, the number nine, for instance, is irreplaceable by any other number, which means that it excludes any other number from a given position in that equation; and by virtue of that, it may be considered self-identical; hence, it constitutes a unit (*unitas*) in itself. However, it is impossible to deny that at the same time, it is also divisible. Therefore, *unity* or *identity* is paired up with *divisibility* in the case of real numbers as well.

⁹³*Considerations sur la doctrine d'un Esprit Universel Unique*; GERHARDT ed., 1965 vol. VI, p. 538.

substances. Soul is thus the metaphysical principle which allows the articulation or individuation of substance into subjects identifiable as individuals, which are, so experience teaches us, the real agents in the phenomenal world. As LEIBNIZ words his conclusion:

*Hence, it is a lot more reasonable to believe that besides God, who is the supreme active principle, there are many individual active substances because there are many contradictory individual actions and passive conditions, which can not be attributed to one and the same subject. These active substances are nothing but the individual souls.*⁹⁴

When all is said and done, the philosophical inconsistency LEIBNIZ perceives between a concept of God as *ultima ratio rerum* and that of a world soul is, perhaps, best explained by a reference to one of the most fundamental metaphysical texts LEIBNIZ wrote, *On the Ultimate Origination of Things (De rerum originatione radicali, 1697)*, where, at the very beginning, he seems to repeat what he said at the end of *Deum non esse mundi animam* (point ⟨c⟩),⁹⁵ this time as part of a more general metaphysical statement:

*Beyond the world, that is, beyond the collection of finite things, there is some One Being who rules, not only as the soul is the ruler in me, or, better, as the self is the ruler in my body, but also in a much higher sense. For the One Being who rules the universe not only rules the world, but also fashions or creates it; he is above the world, and, so to speak, extramundane, and therefore he is the ultimate reason for things. For we cannot find in any of the individual things, or even in the entire collection and series of things, a sufficient reason for why they exist.*⁹⁶

Here we encounter again the concept of the world as an *aggregate* of finite things: the world is not *one* substance but an indeterminate amount of individual substances. Yet these finite substances are connected in *one* system operating by virtue of the principle of *consent* (*‘horum omnium connexio inter se’*).⁹⁷ Hence, it is reasonable to conclude that the unitary machine of the phenomenal world results from and is dominated by a single efficient cause, *Unum aliquod Dominans*.

The relation of this dominating substance to the world, however, may not be conceived on the analogy of man, *ut in me anima* – God may not be represented as

⁹⁴“*Il est donc bien plus raisonnable de croire, qu’outre Dieu, qui est l’Actif supreme, il y a quantité d’actifs particuliers, puisqu’il y a quantité d’actions et passions particulieres et opposées, qui ne sauroient estre attribuées à un sujet, et ces actifs ne sont autre chose, que les ames particulieres.*” (*Ibid.*; p. 537. Transl. M. VASSÁNYI.)

⁹⁵See Section 4 *supra*; ⟨c⟩: “*Sunt et alia argumenta quale illud est, quod Deus est productor mundi continuus, Anima autem corporis sui productrix non est.*” (AV, vol. VI/4, p. 1492; text № 293.)

⁹⁶“*Praeter Mundum seu Aggregatum rerum finitarum datur Unum aliquod Dominans, non tantum ut in me anima, vel potius ut in meo corpore ipsum ego, sed etiam ratione multo altiore. Unum enim dominans Universi non tantum regit Mundum sed et fabricat seu facit, et mundo est superius et ut ita dicam extramundanum, estque adeo ultima ratio rerum. Nam non tantum in nullo singulorum, sed nec in toto aggregato serieque rerum inveniri potest sufficiens ratio existendi.*” (*De rerum originatione radicali, 1697*; GERHARDT ed., 1965, vol. VII, p. 302. Transl. by R. ARIEW and B. GARBER, p. 149, highlighting added.)

⁹⁷Not a literal citation; cf. *ibid.* (p. 305): “*Id autem ⟨scil. ultima ratio realitatis tam essentialium quam existentialium⟩ non nisi in uno fonte quaeri potest ob horum omnium connexionem inter se.*”

the soul of the world, for God not only controls the universal natural process (*regit Mundum*), but is also Maker of the world. The world, i.e., the whole aggregate of finite things is only a series of *possible* essences in which we nowhere perceive a determining ground capable of turning a possibility of existence into real existence. Finite things in themselves have only an *inclination* towards existence, depending on their degree of perfection, but no *necessity* to exist ('*omnia possibilia tendunt ad existentiam pro gradu perfectionis*').⁹⁸

Thus, we seek a necessary being in which to ground the *existence*, and the specific internal *nature*, of all finite substances considered as an inorganic whole ("*cur scilicet aliquis potius sit Mundus, et cur talis*").⁹⁹ But the next thing we notice according to the order of human cognition are the natural laws of the phenomenal world, subsumed under metaphysical laws, which perfectly coordinate the natural universe. The essences of these laws are eternal truths (*aeternae veritates*), and since existence can be caused only by what exists, the eternal truths themselves exist in an absolutely necessary subject: in the mind of God.

In this manner, God, as the *ultima ratio rerum*, is Reason in the double sense of the word: He is the efficient *cause* of the *existence* of the world as well as the perfect *reasonability* that penetrates and even constitutes the *essences* of the things. For our study, however, the most important attribute of God is His position outside the concatenation of contingent things. The absolute contingency of the world means, for LEIBNIZ, the lack of a determining cause of existence and essence which can bring it about that there *is* something rather than nothing, and which has the infinite power to determine, by virtue of its own infinite essence, an indefinitely great number of finite natures. "*Hence, the reasons of things lie hidden in something extramundane, which is different from the concatenation of conditions or the series of things the aggregate of which has established the world*"¹⁰⁰: the (efficient and formal) causes of the natural universe are in the perfect, supernatural Reason *beyond* the bounds of the world.

On the basis of this doctrine concerning the predetermined, active internal nature of the finite substances, and on the basis of his theology of the extramundane Deity, LEIBNIZ can now reasonably say in respect of the *world soul conceived as subordinate to God* that it is philosophically tolerable but not necessary. At least such a relatively complex philosophical attitude is expressed by his refusal (in *De ipsa natura*) and acceptance (in *Considerations sur la doctrine d'un Esprit Universel Unique*) of this doctrine. This latter text, as well as *Deum non esse mundi animam*, however, decidedly express LEIBNIZ's refusal to conceive of God either as the *soul*

⁹⁸Not a literal citation; cf. *ibid.* (p. 303): "*Unde porro sequitur, omnia possibilia, seu essentiam vel realitatem possibilem exprimentia, pari jure ad e{xist}entiam tendere pro quantitate essentiae seu realitatis, vel pro gradu perfectionis quem involvunt...*" (GERHARDT's text has *essentiam*, a corrupt reading, in the corrected place.)

⁹⁹*Ibid.*; p. 302.

¹⁰⁰"*Rationes igitur rerum latent in aliquo extramundano, differente a catena statuum seu serie rerum, quarum aggregatum mundum constituit.*" (*Ibid.*; p. 303. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

of the world in the classic sense of the term (the *anima mundi* entertaining a *commercium*-relationship with the world as its body), or as a universal *spirit* identical with the distributive unity of finite incorporeal minds. All in all, we might say that his thought concerning the concept of *anima mundi*, *ame du monde* is philosophically subtle, but generally refusing rather than accepting. Let us now see if this attitude is different in the case of the great systematic disciple, WOLFF.

6 *The Wolffian Argument Against the Existence of a World Soul: the Difference of the Object of Perception from the Organ of Perception*

Although we have seen, in [Section 2](#) of Chapter 2, on what *general* lines WOLFF rejected the corporeality of God, we have to consider, because of their theoretical significance, his different *specific* arguments (§ 159) against the identification of God, a spirit or *mens*, with a hypothetical *anima mundi* as well. WOLFF, at least in [Part I](#) of the *Theologia naturalis*, refrains from a detailed analysis of the concept of the world soul. The point of departure and *nervus probandi* of his refutation here is God's distinct knowledge of all parts of all possible worlds, a principle that ultimately derives from the Leibnizian thesis that God *chooses* the best world from among all conceivable worlds.

For LEIBNIZ, this choice of God is determined by the pervasive rationality of the divine nature. In, e.g., the *Essais de théodicée*, he expounds this rational theological thesis in the following words: “*an infinite number of worlds are possible, of which, necessarily, God has chosen the best one, because He does not do anything without following the supreme reason.*”¹⁰¹ For God's intellect is not only the *regio idearum*, the intelligible world or *mundus intelligibilis*, where the essence of every *existing* thing is,¹⁰² but also the region where God considers and perfectly knows all *possible* worlds, together with all their individual constitutive parts.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹“...il y a une infinité de mondes possibles dont il faut que Dieu ait choisi le meilleur, puisqu'il ne fait rien sans agir suivant la supreme raison.” (*Essais de théodicée*, part one, 8; GERHARDT ed., 1965, vol. VI, p. 107. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

¹⁰²Cf. letter to HANSCH, 25th July 1707: “*III. Interim pulcherrima sunt multa Platonis dogmata, quae tu quoque attingis: unam omnium caussam esse; esse in divina mente mundum intelligibilem, quem ego vocare soleo regionem idearum.*” (editorial title: “*LXIV. Epistola ad Hanschium de philosophia Platonica sive de entusiasmo Platonico*”; ed. ERDMANN, p. 445 b.)

¹⁰³Cf. *De rerum originatione radicali*: “*Ita ergo habemus ultimam rationem realitatis tam essentialium quam existentiarum in uno, quod utique mundo ipso majus, superius antieriusque esse necesse est, cum per ipsum non tantum existentia, sed et possibilia habeant realitatem.*” (Underlining added; GERHARDT, C. I., 1965, vol. VII, p. 305.) This implies that God perfectly knows all individual substances of all possible worlds, as the following undated fragment (with the *incipit* “*Verum est affirmatum...*”) points out: “*Dum autem eam (scil. a possible created mind) considerat ut possibilem, perfecteque cognoscit in ea omnia ejus futura eventa ut possibilia, sed cum ipsa (quanquam contingenter, infallibiliter tamen) connexa, jam nunc intelligit, hoc est perfecte scit omnia quae sint ipsius existentiam consecutura.*” (Manuscript Phil. IV 3 a, 1–4; COUTURAT, p. 23. COUTURAT, the editor entitled this fragment as “*Sur le vérités nécessaires et contingentes.*”)

God's intellect in the second case may be named "*the expanded intelligible world*", as GURWITSCH calls it.¹⁰⁴

WOLFF for his part argues that God's considered choice presupposes detailed comparison and hence, clear and distinct knowledge. In the relevant passage (§ 156) of the first part of *Theologia naturalis*, he is, however, reticent on the *mode of thought* (discursive or intuitive?) in which God compares with each other the numerically infinite parts of the infinite possible worlds. Yet it seems reasonable to suppose that an intellectual operation of this magnitude demands intuition rather than discursive thought. Thus, on the basis of a fundamental theological thesis of LEIBNIZ, WOLFF arrives at the preliminary conclusion that God, being infinite reason, necessarily has perfect representations of, among other things, the present world in which we live:

*God knows distinctly all that... can be known, nothing confusedly. For God has represented all possible worlds to Himself, and has chosen this one, which exists, from among the rest (§ 121). He did so for objective reasons (§ 119) deriving, indeed, from the feature by virtue of which this existing world differs from the rest (§ 120). Since He, thus, deeply intuited the difference of this existing world from all the other, equally possible worlds, nothing can be conceived in any of these worlds that He has not come to know, as He determined everything as mutually distinguishable from each other and even individually nameable. Consequently, He has come to know distinctly all that there is in each single one of these worlds in any specific manner...*¹⁰⁵

Once we have accepted this proposition about God's distinct knowledge (or perfect representation) of all parts of all possible worlds (including our world), it is easy to prove that, hence, God may not have either senses or imagination, since both of these produce *imperfect* representations (cf. § 157: "*Deus sensu atque imaginatione caret*"). This will be the first premiss of the Wolffian syllogism against the identification of God with the *anima mundi*.

On the other hand, if a rational soul is to animate a piece of organic matter, there has to be natural interaction between them. WOLFF turns to *rational psychology* for the definition of the natural relation there is between a particular body and the rational soul animating this body (we remember that the Wolffian and Baumgartenian system of natural theology is a superstructure raised on three more fundamental sciences: ontology, cosmology and rational, i.e., non-empirical psychology). He calls this natural relation the harmony of mind and body, and specifies in § 539 of

¹⁰⁴ "...der erweiterter mundus intelligibilis." (GURWITSCH, Chapter VIII, § 2; p. 441. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, underlining added.)

¹⁰⁵ "Deus omnia cognoscit distincte, quae... cognitu possibile sunt, nihil confuse. Etenim Deus omnes mundos posibles sibi repraesentavit & hunc, qui existit, ex ceteris elegit (§ 121) & quidem ob rationem objectivam (§ 119), adeoque desumptam ab eo, quo hic, qui existit, mundus a ceteris differt (§ 120). Quoniam adeo differentiam hujus, qui existit, mundi a ceteris omnibus aequè possibilibus intime perspexit...; nihil concipi potest in unoquoque mundo, quod non cognoverit Deus, omnia a se invicem distinguibilia, adeoque sigillatim enunciabilia, decernens. Distincte igitur cognovit, quidque unicuique mundo quocunque modo inest..." (§ 156 of *Theologia naturalis*, Pars prima; eds. ÉCOLE & al., II. Abt., vol. 7.1, p. 136. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

*Psychologia rationalis*¹⁰⁶ what this *harmonia mentis et corporis* implies: on the one hand, the explicability of the mind's perceptions by the alterations that take place in the body; and, on the other hand, the explicability of the voluntary motions of the body by the volitions of the mind (*mens*):

By the 'harmony of body and soul' I understand the phenomenon that the perceptions of the soul can be explained by changes taking place in the body, and that the voluntary motions of the body can be explained by the acts of willingness and unwillingness of the soul, or even by its sensorial desires and aversions. This 'explainability' consists in that the quality of the perceptions of the soul is understood by what takes place in the body, and that the quality of the spontaneous or voluntary motions of the body is understood by the sensorial or rational desires and aversions of the soul...¹⁰⁷

It clearly follows from this that any rational soul (i.e., mind) animating a particular body necessarily has the capacity of sense perception.¹⁰⁸ This will be our second premiss, whereby we may now construct the following syllogism:

1. God may not have sense perception.
2. Any rational soul (mind) animating a body must have sense perception.
3. But God is a (an infinite and perfect) mind.

∑ Hence the mind that is God may not animate any body.

This deduction thus entitles us to draw the general conclusion that it is impossible that God should be the soul of any particular or universal body (and, incidentally, this conclusion is at odds with the doctrine of Incarnation, of the Word taking flesh):

There can be no body which God could be united with as a soul. For let us suppose that... a body can exist which God can be united with as a soul. Since for the union of body and soul to take place, it is sufficient that there be a natural harmony between the coexisting body and soul, the body we are looking for will be one in which such changes occur as can explain the (mental) representations of the material things which this visible universe consists of. Hence, God will be representing those things to Himself according to the changes taking place in that body, and consequently, He will be possessed of sensation; (§ 67 Psych.

¹⁰⁶*Psychologia rationalis* (first edition 1734), in eds. ÉCOLE & al., II. Abt., vol. 6. The demonstration that there is, in every animate being, such a natural harmony between body and soul, follows in § 540.

¹⁰⁷“*Per Harmoniam mentis & corporis intelligimus explicabilitatem perceptionum animae per mutationes in corpore contingentes & motuum voluntariorum in corpore per volitiones ac nolationes animae, vel etiam appetitiones atque aversiones sensitivas ejusdem. Explicabilitas vero ista in hoc consistit, quod ex iis, quae in corpore contingunt, intelligatur, cur tales jam sint animae perceptiones, ex appetitionibus vero ac aversionibus sive sensitivis, sive rationalibus, cur istiusmodi jam in corpore fiant motus spontanei vel voluntarii...*” (Highlighting by WOLFF; *Psychologia rationalis*, in: eds. ÉCOLE & al., II. Abt., vol. 6; p. 460. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) It is clear from § 158 (see *infra*) of the *Theologia naturalis* that WOLFF regarded the natural harmony of (reasonable) soul and body as the necessary and sufficient precondition, and therefore, as the essential constitutive element, of the union of body and (reasonable) soul.

¹⁰⁸In fact, this thesis even follows analytically from the Leibnizian concept of ‘mind’, in that ‘mind’ is that which has the essential attribute of rationality superadded to mere sense perception, the essential attribute of a lower level of perfection (*anima stricte dicta*; cf. Section 2).

empir.; and since this is an absurdity (§ 157), there can be no body whatsoever which God could be united with as a soul.¹⁰⁹

One may suppose that in this passage, WOLFF uses the term *anima* in a generic sense in which it may refer to reasonable soul (mind) as well. Further, it is important to notice the absolutely general (universal) applicability of this conclusion: this is a quality we do not find in LEIBNIZ's respective arguments.

It would remain, then, to apply this *universal* proposition syllogistically to the *particular* hypothesis that this visible world (*mundus hic adspectabilis*, as WOLFF generally puts it) is not the body of God (§ 159). Curiously enough, WOLFF overfulfils this relatively simple task: he sets up two demonstrations, only the second of which relies logically on the general thesis reached in the preceding thesis § 158 of Part I of the *Theologia naturalis*. Both of his demonstrations, however, depend on the rational psychological definition of the *harmonia animae cum corpore*:

(1) *God can not be the soul of the world. For let us suppose... that God is the soul of the world. Since the human soul is a simple substance, ... soul in general will be a simple substance too, which represents this universe, i.e., this visible world to itself according to the changes that take place in the sensory organs of a particular organic body. Hence, if God is the soul of the world, the world will be the particular body according to whose changes God represents this visible world to Himself. To be sure, the visible world is (also) the object to be represented, i.e., what the soul represents to itself. This, however, must be something different from the body according to whose changes the (mental) representations must be formed... Consequently, God can not be the soul of the world.*

(2) *This can be shown even in the following manner. I take it for demonstrated that if God is the soul of the world, this visible world will be a body in which such changes occur as can explain the (mental) representations of the (several different) conditions of this universe; now without any doubt, it is clear from the souls which we know that the bodily changes explaining the representations of the body which is united with the soul are different from what the soul represents to itself about the body united to it; and by virtue of the notion we have of the union of body and soul, this cannot be otherwise... In this manner, there can be a body which God can be united with as a soul; but we have seen that this is an absurdity (§ 158); so God can not be the soul of the world.¹¹⁰*

¹⁰⁹“Nullum possibile est corpus, cui Deus tanquam anima uniri possit. Ponamus enim... possibile esse corpus, cui Deus tanquam anima uniri possit. Quoniam ad unionem animae cum corpore sufficit harmonia naturalis animae ac corporis coexistentium..., corpus possibile erit, in quo mutationes contingunt, per quas explicari possunt repraesentationes rerum materialium, ex quibus mundus hic adspectabilis consistit. Deus igitur res illas sibi repraesentat convenienter mutationibus, quae in isto corpore contingunt, consequenter gaudet sensu (§ 67 Psych. empir.): quod cum sit absurdum (§ 157), corpus utique impossibile est, cum quo Deus tanquam anima uniri possit.” (§ 158 of *Theologia naturalis*, Pars prima; eds. ÉCOLE & al., II. Abt., vol. 7.1, p. 139. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

¹¹⁰“(1) *Deus non potest esse anima mundi. Ponamus enim... Deum esse animam mundi. Quoniam anima hominis substantia est simplex, ...anima in genere erit substantia simplex, quae sibi repraesentat hoc universum, seu mundum hunc adspectabilem convenienter mutationibus, quae in organis corporis cujusdam organici sensoriis contingunt. Quamobrem si Deus sit anima mundi, erit mundus illud corpus, cujus mutationibus convenienter Deus sibi mundum hunc adspectabilem repraesentat. Enimvero mundus adspectabilis est objectum repraesentationis, seu id, quod anima sibi repraesentat, adeoque ab illo corpore, cujus mutationibus convenienter fieri debet repraesentatio, diversum esse debet... Fieri adeo nequit, ut Deus sit anima mundi.*

The first argument, then, reduces the hypothesis to a conceptual contradiction: WOLFF points out the logical discrepancy that results (if God is to be the *anima mundi*) from the inevitable identity of the *objectum repraesentatum* and the *organum repraesentandi*, and concludes that the hypothesis is impossible.¹¹¹

In the second argument, we presume that this world *is* an organic body, which represents the different states of the universe by virtue of changes occurring in its sense organs. But these *de rebus extraneis* representations have to be different from those which report on the soul's *own* body, the *de rebus internis* representations: for the soul perceives both classes of representations but seldom confuses them. Let us now suppose that the divine mind is able to make the difference between the *de rebus extraneis* and the *de rebus internis* perceptions – thus it will be, in theory, possible that God has a body (“*possibile igitur est aliquod corpus, cui Deus tanquam anima uniri potest*”).

On the other hand, however, we have shown, in § 158, that all God's perceptions are distinct so He may not have sense perception. For this reason, He may not have a body either. Therefore, the initial hypothesis must be dropped, with the conclusion that this universe is not God's body.

Visibly, then, WOLFF invested considerable dialectical effort into the refutation of the “*Deus anima mundi*” hypothesis. The reason for this might be an historical one, namely, the spreading of Spinozism. WOLFF played an eminent role in the intellectual strife against that philosophy, thought to be by most contemporaries an atheistic heresy. As is known, when SPINOZA's *Ethics* came out in the first German translation in 1744, a lengthy section from WOLFF's *Theologia naturalis* was added as an annihilating philosophical postscript to the little thick volume.¹¹² Namely, the

(2) *Idem etiam sic ostenditur. Sumo per demonstrata, si Deus sit anima mundi, mundum hunc adspectabilem esse corpus, in quo contingunt mutationes, per quas explicabilis est repraesentatio statuum hujus universi: patet nimirum ex iis, quas cognoscimus, animabus mutationes corporis, per quas explicabiles sunt repraesentationes hujus ipsius corporis, cui anima unita est, esse diversas ab eo, quod de corpore sibi unito anima repraesentat, nec per notionem unionis animae cum corpore res habere sese aliter potest... Possibile igitur est aliquod corpus, cui Deus tanquam anima uniri potest quod cum sit absurdum (§ 158), Deus anima mundi esse nequit.” (§ 159 of *Theologia naturalis, Pars prima*; eds. ÉCOLE & al., II. Abt., vol. 7.1, pp. 140–141. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)*

¹¹¹Cf. also the following note to § 159 of the *Theologia naturalis, pars prima*: “...*objectum repraesentationis diversum esse debere ab organo, in quo mutationem quandam producit, dum in anima repraesentatur...*” (Eds. ÉCOLE & al., II. Abt., vol. 7, 1; p. 141.)

¹¹²“*B. v. S. Sittenlehre widerleget von dem berühmten Weltweisen unserer Zeit Herrn Christian Wolff*”, Frankfurt & Leipzig 1744 (in ÉCOLE & al. eds., III. Abt., vol. 15). In this book, the translation of the *Ethics* is followed by WOLFF's counter-arguments, which are, again, a literal translation into German, of the Latin text of §§ 671–716, on “*Spinozisterey*”, of Part II of the *Theologia naturalis* (in eds. ÉCOLE & al., II. Abt., vol. 8). Note that in WOLFF's *Theologia naturalis*, the numbering of the theses is continuous in the two volumes of Part I (a posteriori theology), but it starts all over again from § 1 in Part II (a priori theology and refutation of the different kinds of atheism).

“*Deus anima mundi*” theory could be represented as a peculiar version of Spinozism (as it really was so represented by BAYLE in the *Dictionaire historique et critique*, see *infra* Sections 4 and 5 of Chapter 7). Spinozism, in turn, was perceived by many to pose a growing threat both to natural and supernatural theology. This may, perhaps, explain WOLFF’s outstanding interest in the topic.

There are two distant rational theological questions in respect of the idea of God emerging in the wake of an argument that God is not soul of the world. First, if God is not present within the natural world as its soul, then in what manner is He present here at all (*praesentia Dei*)? Second, if we agree as we do that He is not to be conceived as the soul of a body, then in what sense may we assert that He is alive (*vita Dei*)? How shall we philosophically reconcile the concept of God as the *ens extramundanum* with the traditional theological doctrines about the omnipresence and life of God? These questions, besides being theoretically unavoidable, are also of a serious historical bearing because what the early German Romantics, and before them HERDER, missed in both the traditional and in the critically examined Kantian idea of God was precisely a doctrine expressing the younger generation’s fundamental existential experience: the real presence of a life divine in nature, the real presence of infinite life in the finite. In what follows, we shall try to reconstruct the systematic answer of the Wolffian-Baumgartenian school to this question, namely, their theology of causal divine presence with respect to the concept of life.

7 A General Assessment of the Theology of Causal Divine Presence in the Wolffian-Baumgartenian School and Its Shortcomings

The Wolffian-Baumgartenian theology of causal divine presence (which appeared as an almost perfect alternative to the *Deus anima mundi* theory, but which was at the same time bound to collapse with KANT and with the German Romantics for reasons we hope to show later) is articulated in three main constituent parts: (1) a theory of God’s *causal presence* in nature; (2) a theory of a *life divine*, paired up with a hylozoistic natural philosophical conception; and (3) a theory of the *final cause* of Creation.

First, before we discuss the actual content of the concept of divine presence, we have to point out an immediate conceptual difficulty. In the notion of *presence*, there is the allegedly constitutive element that the subject is in a specific physical place. However, God is, for traditional theology, an *ens non extensum*, which may not be in any particular place (“*Deus... in loco esse haud quaquam potest*”, § 1036 of WOLFF’s *Theologiae naturalis Pars I*, 2). To resolve this difficulty, WOLFF, relying on ST. THOMAS, attributes a double sense to the term *praesentia*. There is, he says, a *praesentia in loco* and a *praesentia per eminentiam*, a synonym of which would be, in Thomistic terminology, the expression *praesentia per causam*, the virtual (“*ut in loco*”) presence of a cause in its effects.

As a matter of fact, WOLFF, when specifying God's many-sided relation to the natural world, applies this expedient regularly: God is first denied to have, in a strict sense, properly, any relation with (or distinct knowledge of) some particular aspect of finite existence; but then, in turn, He is asserted to have *per eminentiam* access to (or knowledge of) the finite thing or quality in question.

The specific modes, then, in which the Infinite is conceived by WOLFF and BAUMGARTEN alike to be present in the finite universe are the three main activities of *creatio*, *conservatio* and *gubernatio* (§ 1106 of *Theologiae naturalis Pars I*, 2; cf. §§ 950–963 in BAUMGARTEN'S *Metaphysica*). Creation, in respect of the problem of actual divine presence, refers to the production of new souls and spirating life into them. Conservation, the most important in this context, is God's sustaining activity in every moment of time (*creatio continuata*). Direction or *gubernatio*, the philosophically least emphasized facet of *praesentia Dei*, is God's guidance of the world towards its pre-established final cause, the *finis creationis*. This is the glorification of God, *illustratio gloriae divinae* (cf. § 947 in BAUMGARTEN'S *Metaphysica*). For BAUMGARTEN, again, *conservatio* and *gubernatio* together constitute divine providence, *providentia*.¹¹³

The focus of this presentation is, beyond doubt, on God's preserving activity, because this implies His continuous, active influence on every single element of the physical universe ("*influxus substantiae infinitae in finitis*", § 449 in BAUMGARTEN'S *Metaphysica*). In this scheme, finite things are, as it were, exposed to an *irradiation of the divine* that draws them forth from non-being into being. God's conserving activity thus conceived is in fact a *continuata creatio* (§ 951, *ibid.*), which is then conceptually identified with God's presence: "*God's immediate succour is His presence*" ("*Concursus Dei immediatus est eiusdem praesentia*", § 955, *ibid.*). WOLFF argumentatively attributes this presence to the full intensity of the Godhead with reference to the totality of finite beings, whereby he can speak of an *omnipraesentia intima Dei* (cf. §§ 1046–1047, 1051, 1054–1057). BAUMGARTEN will say that "*God is most omnipresent*" ("*Deus est omnipraesentissimus*", § 955), where the superlative is meant to express, as BAUMGARTEN specifies, the proximity or *intimity* of divine presence in or for the finite thing. WOLFF presents the essence of this theory in the following manner:

*God is present for everything in the entire universe, i.e., for every creature. This is because no creature could continue to exist by its own powers (§ 840), but God continues to give it the existence He gave it at the beginning, so long as a particular creature exists (§ 841); in other words, He operates incessantly on the creatures.*¹¹⁴

¹¹³Cf. the title ("*Providentia*") of Section III, Chapter II, Part IV of BAUMGARTEN'S *Metaphysica*; p. 389.

¹¹⁴"*Deus praesens est rebus omnibus in toto universo, seu omni creaturae. Etenim creatura ulla existentiam propria virtute continuare nequit (§ 840), sed Deus, quam dedit in principio, dare pergit, quamdiu durat (§ 841), consequenter indesinenter in creaturas agit (§ 842).*" (§ 1046 of *Theologiae naturalis Pars I*, 2; eds. ÉCOLE & al., II. Abt., vol. 7.2, p. 1019. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

BAUMGARTEN says virtually the same:

*Preservation is God's continuous influence, § 950, 895, which is a real influence, § 212, because the existence of the universe can not be the effect of any finite thing, § 308. Creation is also a real influence, § 926. Therefore, preservation is rightly called continuous creation.*¹¹⁵

While for a theory of God as the world soul God is *inside* the world (*in mundo*, ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ), for WOLFF, we may say that God is *into* the world (*in mundum*, εἰς τὸν κόσμον). God, to use a metaphor suggested by WOLFF, is like the Eternal Gardener who is present *for* the tree through an activity of care (ontological sustentation), although He is not *inside* the tree:

*We have already pointed out above (see note to § 1019) that, on the basis of an action that a thing carries out upon another, it is possible to argue for the presence of this thing in the particular sense in which we say that a gardener is present for the tree from which he cuts off the twigs devoid of fertile buds; and in which we say that the sun is present for the garden as it dries up the soil. On these grounds, even St. Thomas supposes that a thing is there where it operates; and he concludes from this that God is in all things or (which is the same), that He is present for everything in so far as He acts upon a thing that is in action, as He – in the course of His universal succour, which takes place by the activity of sustentation – grants a power of operation to the substance in action, which He preserves.*¹¹⁶

God is present as a continuously functioning efficient cause *for* the universe of finite physical things; and this presence, understood as uninterrupted and intimate causal activity is, we learn, part of God's *life* as well. Therefore, the metaphysical disquisition of the Wolffian-Baumgartenian conception of God leads us toward a second important theological concept on account of which this theology was later questioned, namely, toward the *vita Dei*. In what specific sense may we say that

¹¹⁵“*Conservatio est influxus Dei continuus, § 950, 895. isque realis, § 212. quia existentia sua (scil. universi) nullius finiti effectus esse potest, § 308. Idem est creatio, § 926. Unde conservatio non male dicitur continuata creatio.*” (§ 951 of the *Metaphysica*, p. 389. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) Parallel formulations are to be found in BAUMGARTEN'S *Metaphysica* under § 334: “*Ergo substantia extra ipsum (scil. ens contingens & finitum) posita (scil. Deus) in illud agit existentiam influendo...*” (p. 102), as well as under § 950: “*Ergo (hic mundus) non potest durare nisi ut caussatum extra se positi vel uno momento, § 307. Ergo vis extramundana operatur durationem (the continuance) eius in quovis durationis momento, § 210. Haec deus est...*” (p. 389).

¹¹⁶“*Monuimus jam supra (not. § 1019), ex actione entis unius in alterum praesentiam concludi eodem sensu, quo hortulanus arbori praesens dicitur, ex qua surculos gemis gravidis destitutos resecat, & sol terram desiccans horto praesens est. Hinc & D(ivus) Thomas sumit ibi rem esse, ubi operatur, ac inde concludit, Deum esse in rebus omnibus, seu, quod perinde est, esse rebus omnibus praesentem, ut agens in id, quod agit: in concursu nimirum universali, qui fit per conservationem (§ 874), substantiae agenti, quam conservat, vires agendi largitur (§ 876).*” (Note to § 1046 of *Theologiae naturalis Pars I*, 2; eds. ÉCOLE & al., II. Abt., vol. 7.2, p. 1019. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) The words *conservationem/conservat* towards the end of the citation remind us that it is God's sustaining activity only which is being discussed here.

God is *alive*, if He, as we have seen, does not entertain a *commercium*-relation with a body?

In his theory of life, WOLFF is a true follower of his master: he represents every thing, finite or infinite, as ‘animate’ in that all three classes of simple substances (the elements of matter, the finite souls, and God), and through them, all composite substances as well are possessed with their respective active forces (*vires activae*). This is the essential moment of the Wolffian broad definition of life:

§ 107. *We say that a thing is living if it possesses an active principle in itself.*

§ 108. *Hence, life consists in the uninterrupted activity of a particular being.*¹¹⁷

For WOLFF, then, the concept of life boils down to that of the specific active power of a simple substance¹¹⁸: he inevitably sees such substances as displaying continuous activity (of expression or representation), as being in uninterrupted actuality (see § 108).¹¹⁹ Now whatever there is in the intellectual and material cosmos is constituted by simple substances unified by their respective *principia vitalia*.¹²⁰ Therefore, absolutely all is ‘alive’. WOLFF further specifies that among all beings, God is the source of life for all others (“*Creaturae viventes omnes vitam a Deo habent*”),¹²¹ and that His life is pure intellection and volition (“*Vita Dei consistit in continuo intellectus ac voluntatis actu*”).¹²² Consequently, God ensures the preservation and animation of the physical world by a pure and direct application or determination of His will-power. Since, eventually, part of the divine life, i.e., activity, is the conservation or sustentation of the finite world

¹¹⁷“§ 107. *Vivum dicitur, quod habet principium activum in se. § 108. Vita igitur in continua actuositate entis alicuius consistit.*” (*Theologia naturalis Pars I, 1*; eds. ÉCOLE & al., II. Abt., vol. 7.1, p. 86. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) BAUMGARTEN does not examine the concept of a life divine explicitly.

¹¹⁸As a consequence of this, *soul* in a strict sense is not considered necessary for a thing to be alive; soul is only a particular mode of coming to life. PLOUCQUET will put this in his summary of Leibnizian monadology (cf. point LXV, under § XL, p. 17 of his *De hylozoismo*) in the following way: everything is alive by virtue of its substantial form (*entelechia*), but whatever is *vivens* is not necessarily an *animal*.

¹¹⁹The question why simple substances should be conceived like this may prove unexpectedly difficult, since from a historical point of view, it seems clear that this hylozotic doctrine is a Leibnizian heritage in WOLFF. In terms of systematic demonstration, however, only the material elements and the finite soul are *proved*, on topologically different points of the system (material elements: § 196 of the *Cosmologia generalis*, finite souls: § 53 of the *Psychologia rationalis*, q.v.) to have their respective active forces.

¹²⁰Cf. GURWITSCH, IV, § 6: “*Die Substanz als »principium vitale«*”; pp. 190 ff.

¹²¹§ 1109 of *Theologiae naturalis Pars I, 2*; eds. ÉCOLE & al., II. Abt., vol. 7.2, p. 1072.

¹²²*Ibid.*, § 1108.

(even though God's life is not exhausted by His activity *ad extra*),¹²³ finite life will be contiguous with infinite life in the sense in which an effect is contiguous with its cause.

In our last considerations about immediate divine presence and life divine we have considered, with WOLFF, God as the *efficient* cause of the visible universe. A third train of thought, concerning God as the *final* cause of the world, still must be carried out before we may draw a general conclusion regarding the relation of Wolffian-Baumgartenian rational theology to the theory of the world soul.

Here, again, it is suggested that Creation essentially points to God as a final cause: the *Schulphilosophie* expounds a theory of divine representation that is sympathetic with HAMANN's symbolic interpretation of nature.¹²⁴ WOLFF and BAUMGARTEN, establishing a hermeneutics of the natural world, affirm that whatever is finite is an image or manifestation of the Infinite ("*mundus perfectissimus est in finitis imago Dei maxima*", § 858 of BAUMGARTEN's *Metaphysica*). Hence, all natural phenomena together are like a system of signs that point to the presence of the Creator ("*...ex signo cognoscitur praesentia rei signatae*", § 608 of WOLFF's *Theologiae naturalis Pars I, 1*). The final cause of Creation is "*the manifestation of the uttermost perfection of God*" ("*patefactio summae Dei perfectionis*")¹²⁵ for the human observer, says WOLFF (*ibid.*, § 610). For BAUMGARTEN, the ultimate effect as well as the final cause of this divine manifestation has been religion in man (*religio, cultus Dei*). As he puts it in § 947 of his *Metaphysica*:

*The good disposition of mind, motivated by divine glory, is the representation of divine glory (that is, the cult of God). God's glory together with its representation are religion. The glory of God is advantageous to the divine cult, § 336, 712, glory and cult together are advantageous to religion, § 336. Hence, the objectives of creation were the cult of God and religion, § 942, 946.*¹²⁶

The specific difference of this theory of God, in contrast to a general theory of the world soul, is first and foremost that it excludes all mediation from the relationship of the Infinite with the Finite. The Finite borders immediately on the Infinite in a manner that essential qualities of the Infinite are reproduced, with the inevitable

¹²³Cf. the note to § 1108 of *Theologiae rationalis Pars I, 2*: "*Actiones Dei ad extra, quales sunt creatio, conser-vatio & gubernatio hujus universi, sunt Dei vivi, sed non vita ipsa in actu omnipotentiae extra se operantis consistit; cum enim liberrime mundum aliquem produxerit (§ 431), adeoque nullum producere potuisset, si libuisset (§ 430); non minus vivus fuisset, quam ubi mundum creavit creaturamque conservat ac gubernat.*" (Eds. ÉCOLE & al., II. Abt., vol. 7.2, p. 1072.)

¹²⁴Cf., of HAMANN, the *Des Ritters von Rosencranz letzte Willensmeynung* (1770) and the less hermetic *Aesthetica in nuce: Eine Rhapsodie in Kabbalistischer Prose* (1762).

¹²⁵Cf. § 629 of *Theologiae naturalis Pars I, 1*: "*Patefactio* (scil. creaturae intelligenti vel rationali) *summae Dei perfectionis seu manifestatio gloriae divinae est finis ultimus, quem Deus per existantiam hujus universi intendit.*" (Eds. ÉCOLE & al., II. Abt., vol. 7.1, p. 585.)

¹²⁶"*Bona spiritus determinatio ex motivis gloriae divinae est ILLUSTRATIO GLORIAE DIVINAE (cultus dei). Gloria dei & illustratio ejus sunt RELIGIO. Iam gloria Dei utilis est ad cultum eius, § 336, 712, gloria & cultus ad religionem, § 336. Ergo fines creationis fuerunt cultus dei & religio, § 942, 946.*" (p. 388. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, small capitals by BAUMGARTEN.)

modifications and restrictions, in the Finite as a result of its constant exposition to the ontological influence of the Infinite. This constant influence, however, is specified to involve mainly the sustentation in existence of what is finite, since finite things were vested by God with their operative and receptive powers already at the moment of creation.

Further, the restricted character of the finite effects does not prevent them from directly manifesting the Infinite, while the Infinite One is represented as having an explicit interest in the highest-ranking finite being, man. This is a theology of divine interest in the Finite. Yet, the central tension of this theology is the theoretical reconciliation of the concept of the Infinite with a presence in the Finite. This problem is resolved, in great part, by attributing “*per eminentiam*” operations to God, which, however, involve a degree of abstraction or lack of determination. The *causal* presence of the Divine, paired up with the fundamental theological thesis that God is an *ens extramundanum* (God is an external cause), somehow stops at the dividing line between Finite and Infinite, only the *effects* of divine activity being able to cross over *into* the Finite. This dividing line, the point of intersection between Finite and Infinite, is left here in partial conceptual obscurity; the instruments of rational theology cannot be applied to it. Let us make one more step to see how the Leibnizian doctrines on natural philosophy and the world soul were further developed, in particular, in the later Enlightenment by a critical heir to the school, Tübingen professor Gottfried PLOUCQUET.

8 *PLOUCQUET’S Criticism of Hylozoism and of Leibnizian Monadology. His Own Philosophy of Nature*

As we mentioned under [Section 4](#) of Chapter 2, the systematic PLOUCQUET rejects all five versions of the *anima mundi* theory by virtue of the dialectical tool of a *diairesis*. As a matter of fact, PLOUCQUET offers the following classification of all possible hylozoistic theories under § III:

Since most people agree to call the phenomena appearing to our senses ‘matter’, and to derive ‘life’ from some principle of forces, (the several different versions of) hylozoism can be divided and subdivided in the following manner: in the material universe,

(1) there is either one soul,

(2) or there are several souls.

(1) If there is but one soul in the material universe,

(1a) it is either of infinite power,

(1b) or of finite power.

(1b) If we suppose that it is possessed of finite power only,

(1bα) it is either controlled by GOD,

(1bβ) or it carries out all its work by itself.

- (2) If, however, there are several souls in the material universe,
 (2a) there is either some non-living matter in the constitution of matter,
 (2b) or all matter is living.
 (2b) If all matter is living,
 (2b α) it is either 'brought to a halt' in the elements at length,
 (2b β) or it is not.¹²⁷

Since we are not interested here in all hylozoistical theories but only those concerning an *anima mundi*, we analyse only those of PLOUCQUET's statements and arguments that regard category (1) in all its ramifications. To do this, we first need to show how PLOUCQUET further divides (and at once criticizes) option (1a), concerning the real identification of God with the *anima mundi*, in §§ VI–VII:

§ VI. (1a) *The supposed soul of the world is (1a α) either in a necessary connection with the world, (1a β) or it animates the world freely. (1a α) If there is a necessary connection between the world soul and the world, the world soul will be in a necessary connection with the finite things. That, however, which is necessarily tied to something finite must be finite itself.*

§ VII. (1a β) *If we suppose that some Mind animates the system of material things by a free act, we admit that it has a power of influencing that system. But when we say that it has a power of influencing another thing, it is not necessary to imply that this is a kind of animation by which this Mind, in a way, would be dependent on what it animates.*¹²⁸

In respect of the further division of option (1b α), regarding an *anima mundi* subordinate to God, it is necessary to go to §§ XVI–XVII of *De hylozoismo* now:

§ XVI. (1b α) *If we suppose that a soul, mingled with the frame of the world, is controlled in its operations by GOD, the primordial and most real being, we must first discuss the truthfulness of the notion we have to couple up with the soul of the world.*

¹²⁷“Cum plerique in eo convenient, ut phaenomena sensibus manifesta **materiam** nominent, & **vitam** e principio quodam virium derivent: Hylozoismus dividi & subdividi potest hac ratione: Universo materiali (1) Aut inest anima una; (2) Aut plures animae ipsi inexistunt. (1) Si non nisi Una ipsi inest Anima; (1a) Eadem aut virtutis infinitae statuitur; (1b) aut finitae. (1b) Si finitae tantum virtutis esse assumitur; (1b α) Aut haec dirigitur a DEO, (1b β) Aut a se omnia peragit. (2) Si plures universo materiali inexistunt animae; (2a) Aut tandem relinquitur in resolutione materiae materia non-viva; (2b) aut omnis materia est viva. (2b) Si omnis materia est viva; (2b α) Aut aliquando subsistitur in elementis; (2b β) aut non.” (P. 3; transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, bold characters by PLOUCQUET.)

¹²⁸“§ VI. (1a) Anima mundi, quae fingitur, aut (1a α) necessario colligatur cum mundo, aut (1a β) eadem libere mundum animat. (1a α) Si nexus animam inter & mundum est necessarius; eo ipso connexio cum rebus finitis necessaria conceditur. Quod autem necessario finito est adjunctum, id ipsum finitum esse oportet. § VII. (1a β) Si Mens quaedam actu libero systema rerum materialium animare fingatur; eo ipso virtus agendi in idem systema ipsi conceditur. Posita autem vi agendi in rem aliam, non opus est ea animatione, per quam dependentia quaedam a re animata in Mentem introduceretur.” (P. 4; transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

§ XVII. *If we suppose that it is a substance which animates every part of the world, in a manner that by virtue of this animation, human beings and animals, plants and metals, and the regular forms of every species are generated and preserved, the soul of the world will either (1b*ai*) only be a part of what it animates; or (1b*aii*) it will be the principle of what it animates. (1b*ai*?) If the animating substance animates the world in such a way that the animated thing is a part of the animating thing (!),¹²⁹ the above-mentioned absurdities will follow.¹³⁰ (1b*aii*) But if this universal soul is the efficient cause of every living being and all forms, so that it will appear to itself as the principle of the animated things, then the amount of power attributed to this soul is greater than what can fall to the share of a limited being.¹³¹*

In virtue of the preceding citations, the classification resulting from PLOUCQUET's *diairesis* of the *anima mundi* theories can now be represented in a diagram. The following five classes of this theory are possible to PLOUCQUET's mind:

- (1a*α*) world soul identical with God, of infinite power, in **necessary** connection with the world;
- (1a*β*) world soul identical with God, of infinite power, **freely** animating the world;
- (1b*ai*) world soul directed by God, of finite power, being a **part** of what it animates;
- (1b*aii*) world soul directed by God, of finite power, being the **efficient cause** or principle of all living beings and all forms;
- (1b*β*) world soul of finite power, acting sovereignly by itself.

As concerns PLOUCQUET's argumentation against these substantially different positions, he advances general arguments against class (1a) as a whole, right at the beginning of his study. As we anticipated under [Section 3](#) of Chapter 2, PLOUCQUET discards the identification of God with the world soul, on the one hand, by virtue of a (fragmentary) definition of soul: whatever is soul is an incomplete substance, *ens*

¹²⁹It seems reasonable to suppose that the author exchanged the two terms of the expression here, and to suggest the reading '*Si substantia animans ea ratione mundum animat, ut animans (or animator) sit pars animati...*' It is reasonable to expect that PLOUCQUET should be treating the first alternative of the preceding dilemma, like he takes one alternative after the other in §§ VI–VII as well. Further, the soul has effectively been considered as part of the body by some philosophers, while the reverse thesis is far less evident. See diplomatic transcription of the original below, in footnote.

¹³⁰Cf. § XIV (p. 6). See citation of this paragraph *infra*, at the analysis of (1b*ai*).

¹³¹“§ XVI. (1b*α*) *Si Anima quaedam mundo infusa ponatur dirigi in suis operationibus a DEO, Ente Primitivo & Realissimo: ante omnia de veritate notionis, quae cum Anima mundana jungenda esset, dispiciendum est. § XVII. Cum fingitur substantia omnes mundi partes animans, ita ut ex hac animatione generentur & conserventur homines & pecudes, plantae, metalla & omnium specierum formae regulares; tum Anima aut tantum est pars animati; aut (1b*aii*) ejusdem Principium. (1b*ai*?) *Si substantia animans ea ratione mundum animat, ut animatum sit pars animantis (!); eadem, quae modo memoravi, absurda inde proveniunt. (1b*aii*) Sin autem Anima haec universalis est **Causa efficiens** omnium vivorum omniumque formarum, ita, ut Anima Mundana sibi sit manifesta ut **Principium** animatorum; tum Animae huic tanta virtus adscribitur, quanta in **Ens limitatum non cadit.**” (P. 7; transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting by PLOUCQUET.) The entire paragraph may tacitly refer to Giordano BRUNO's doctrine of the world soul (see Section 8.1 of Chapter 8).**

incompletum. But God, the primary substance, from which all other substances derive, cannot be conceived as an incomplete substance.¹³² On the other hand, however, PLOUCQUET shortly points out another general problem with class (1a) as a whole: that since the extension of matter in the universe is indefinite, it is impossible for a hypothetical *anima mundi* to have metaphysical infinity (and, consequently, to be identical with God), because the magnitude of the forces it would have to apply on its body (cf. the principle of mutual affectability of soul and body) will be mathematically estimatable and therefore finite:

§ V. Hence, the power of the animating agent will be applied to matter as far as the mass of matter is extended; which does not allow the conclusion that this power is infinite in a metaphysical sense, only a conclusion that the magnitude of the forces of the animating agent is mathematically estimatable.¹³³

That a hypothetical soul of the world would be an incomplete substance, and that it would not be infinite, entail, so PLOUCQUET argues, that the class of hypotheses (1a) has to be abandoned *in genere*.

PLOUCQUET's *specific* arguments against the identification of God with the world soul are expounded under §§ VI–VII, cited above, and yield an interesting insight into the German pre-Romantic conviction that the active, animating presence of the Infinite Being *within* the bounds of the finite universe is philosophically unthinkable. PLOUCQUET's argument against (1a α) (that God is, as world soul, necessarily bound up with the physical Universe) is that a being necessarily bound up with (*connexio*) a finite being is necessarily finite itself. This is, in purely theoretical terms, probably less than compelling.

He opposes to (1a β) (that God, as universal soul, freely animates the physical universe) that God, in this case, certainly has a power to influence (*virtus agendi*) the natural world (see § VII above). If this is so, then the manner in which God exerts influence on nature is not necessarily animation. But if the divine influence can be in a different modality, then there is not necessarily a relationship of interdependence, nor a harmony of soul and body, between the divine mind and the natural world. Thus (we may complete the argument), it will not be philosophically legitimate to consider God

¹³²Cf. § IV: “*Notio animae cum sit notio entis incompleti, & referatur ad subjectum ab anima informandum, quod ita informatum constituit Animal...*” (p. 4). In other words, *anima* is for PLOUCQUET an *ens incompletum*, which is only the internal form of a composite subject. On PLOUCQUET's concept of God, see his early (1753) *Principia de substantiis et phaenomenis*, §§ 60–65 (pp. 31–33). On his concept of substance, see *ibid.* § 20 *sqq.* (pp. 8 *sqq.*). On his concept of soul, see *ibid.* especially §§ 498–512 (pp. 322–327). For bibliographical details on PLOUCQUET's *Principia*, see our bibliography under PLOUCQUET 1753.

¹³³§ V. *Quanta igitur est extensio molis materiae; tanta quoque est Virtutis animantis ad materiam applicatio; id quod autem non infert Virtutis hujus infinitatem metaphysicam, sed tantum virium magnitudinem mathematice aestimabilem.*” (PLOUCQUET 1775, p. 4. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) PLOUCQUET's conception of the interaction between soul and body (§ IV) is in line with that of the *Schulphilosophie* (cf. WOLFF, *Psychologia rationalis*, §§ 539–540): both hinge on the thesis of mutual affectability.

as the soul of the world. If our reconstruction of this argument is correct, then we are entitled to say that it is not a demonstration but only a hypothetical syllogism.

In § XII, PLOUCQUET insists that divine power does have real influence (*influxus realis*) on Creation, but this is, in philosophical terms, a *sustentation* (*sustentatio, conservatio*) of the inherent powers of created things, rather than their *animation*. For PLOUCQUET, the philosophical content of animation amounts to much less than that of creation and preservation, in his view the proper activities of the Divinity:

*The real influence of the divine forces on the formed things is not the animation of these things but the sustentation of their derived forces, because the term 'animation', in the received sense, means something much less than the formation and sustentation of things.*¹³⁴

The concept of the Infinite Being is therefore, argues PLOUCQUET, incompatible with that of a real, *animating* presence within the bounds of the physical world: creation (*formatio*) and sustentation are the most fundamental ontological operations as they involve the overcoming of *nihil*. In contrast to this, *animation* in the received sense of the term merely means that an agent brings to organic life the matter which is already there.

It remains to be seen how PLOUCQUET refutes the existence of a world soul conceived as a finite being. We move to class ⟨1b⟩, reviewed under §§ XVI–XVII in his text (see *supra*). By virtue of the *diairesis*, we have here the choice between a finite world soul dependent on God ⟨1bα⟩, and a finite, but independent or sovereign, world soul ⟨1bβ⟩. Now ⟨1bα⟩, as we saw in the above citation, further ramifies into the alternative of the world soul being a part of (or belonging internally to) what it animates ⟨1bαi⟩, and into the alternative that the world soul is the efficient cause of all live beings and of all substantial forms ⟨1bαii⟩.

As regards the text of ⟨1bαi⟩ (*world soul finite, subordinate to God, and part of what it animates*), there is, as we have indicated in a footnote above, a philological problem. If our correction of the passage is good (so we really have to read “...*ut animans sit pars animati*” in the middle of § XVII), then PLOUCQUET’s idea is that a world soul of this kind will be the common internal form of many individual subjects (“*semet ipsum resolvit in personas innumeras*”). Thus, one substrate will bear several contradictory attributes. The principle of contradiction certainly does not put up with this:

§ XIV. According to these mockeries of the imagination, one and the same spirit transforms itself now into a rational, now into an irrational spirit, puts on now this, now that character, appears in innumerable persons, but in a way that the return of all these persons into the same subject remains possible; which are so absurd consequences that they hardly deserve a detailed refutation. For who is there who does not see that one spirit... can not be divided up into several perceiving... subjects; and that several subjects can not be reduced to one that manifests itself.

¹³⁴“*Influxus realis Virium divinarum in res formatas non est rerum formatarum animatio, sed virium derivatarum sustentatio. Animatio enim notione recepta aliquid longe minus significat, quam rerum formatio & sustentatio.*” (P. 5; transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting by PLOUCQUET.)

§ XV. *The character of this alleged spirit is self-contradictory, in so far as it assumes, at the same time, contrary forms, understands and does not understand the same thing, desires and turns away from the same thing...*¹³⁵

On the other hand, ⟨1bαii⟩ (*world soul finite, subordinate to God, and efficient cause of all internal forms*) is at once dropped, for, says PLOUCQUET in § XVII, a finite thing may not be vested with the power necessary for this. As only God can be the first efficient cause or principle of every internal form (“*Virtus suprema format species animantium, omniumque rerum, ac eo ipso producit easdem cum suis viribus & animabus...*”),¹³⁶ we would really identify God with the world soul in this case. The meaning of the qualification “*so that the world soul will appear to itself as the principle of the animated things*” (“*ita, ut Anima Mundana sibi sit manifesta ut Principium animatorum*”) in § XVII is probably that the world soul should have consciousness of its being the principle of all internal forms, otherwise it would operate blindly, which is an even absurder hypothesis, historically linked with the name of STRATON (*Hylozoismus Stratonicus*, cf. § XXII of the *De hylozoismo*), asserts PLOUCQUET.¹³⁷

Hence, the only option of the *diairesis* that is still open is that of a finite world soul not subordinate to God in its operations, ⟨1bβ⟩. But an explicit refutation of this is difficult if not impossible to find in PLOUCQUET'S *disputatio*, in which transitions to new topics or arguments are seldom, if ever, indicated clearly. In systematical terms, however, the confutation he would proffer is not hard to (re)construct. It would probably revolve around the same classical difficulty as ⟨1bαi⟩: that, thus, the world soul will be made the common internal form of many individual substances.¹³⁸

Some of PLOUCQUET'S theses, as it might appear even from what we have cited from them, do not carry serious philosophical conviction. It is quite likely that the young SCHELLING, on reading the *disputatio*, got more inspiration from the sources PLOUCQUET allegedly refuted than from his counter-arguments. When all is said and

¹³⁵“§ XIV. *Secundum hosce imaginationis lusus unus idemque spiritus semet ipsum mutat mox in rationalem, mox in irrationalem, modo hunc, modo alium sibi inducit characterem, semet ipsum resolvit in personas innumeras, ita tamen, ut reditus omnium in Idem Subjectum servetur; quae adeo absurda sunt, ut confutationem prolixiorum vix mereantur. Quis enim non intelligit, Vnum Spiritum... non posse dividi in plura subjecta perceptiva...; neque plura subjecta... reduci posse ad unum sui manifestativum.* § XV. *Character spiritus hujus ficti sibimet ipsi contradicit, cum contrarias assumat eodem tempore formas, idemque simul intelligat & non intelligat, idemque appetat & aversetur...*” (Pp. 6–7; transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

¹³⁶ § XX, p. 8.

¹³⁷“§ XXII. *Alio modo describitur Hylozoismus Stratonicus, vi cujus Natura quaedam omnia gignit & animat sine ullo sensu & consilio.*” (P. 8; bold characters by PLOUCQUET.)

¹³⁸It may be that PLOUCQUET treats ⟨1bβ⟩ implicitly in § XIII (p. 6), where he depicts the ridiculous character of the pre-philosophical doctrine about the formation of the visible world, in chant VI of VIRGIL'S *Aeneid*, lines 724–727. In this passage of the epos, Anchises, teaching Aeneas about the souls' fate in the other world, makes the famous digression on the origin of life in the natural universe: “*Principio caelum ac terras camposque liquentes/lucentemque globum lunae, Titaniaque astra/spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus/mens agitat molem et magno se corpore miscet.*” PLOUCQUET qualifies this summarily as “*imaginationis aberratio*”.

done, then, in respect of PLOUCQUET's position on the world soul hypotheses, we may point out the *absolute* character of his refusal to accept any of them. Whereas LEIBNIZ and WOLFF mainly concentrated on the argument against the identification of God with the universal soul, but did not fully annihilate philosophically the *anima mundi*-hypothesis in its broader form, and while BAUMGARTEN did not make any explicit reference to it, PLOUCQUET demolishes the theory in all its latitude, chiefly by virtue of the expanded use of the Leibnizian *principium individuationis*.

The main strength of the text, however, lies not so much with the *reductio ad absurdum* of the world soul hypotheses, but in its critical assessment of LEIBNIZ's monadology and ROBINET's biological transformationalism,¹³⁹ on the one hand, and in PLOUCQUET's own theory of finite substances as 'real images', *imagines reales*, of the infinite divine force, on the other hand; in short, in his own alternative of natural philosophy.

This natural philosophy, then, which is propounded in contradistinction to a number of concurrent theories, all refuted one after the other, is an interesting composite of fundamental metaphysics and of the theory of life. The author's first metaphysical intention is to exclude any mediating agent from between the *actuositas infinita* (God) and the finite substances: hence, the arguments against the world soul. The *vis infinita* is asserted to produce a system of representations of itself. Every finite thing in the world is an *imago realis* of the infinite being ("Vis infinita principio formativo seu generativo pollens format systema imaginum realium").¹⁴⁰ Finite things are *real* images in that they are, in metaphysical terms, realities or independent substances. Yet, this metaphysical independence is relative insofar as the real images depend on God for their formation and sustentation (cf. § XII, cited *supra*); but it is still independence insofar as they are all possessed with their own active forces. PLOUCQUET even says that matter as such has these powers ("*manifestum esse judico, materiae inesse vires*").¹⁴¹

¹³⁹For PLOUCQUET's criticism of LEIBNIZ, see *infra*. – On the other hand, PLOUCQUET rejects also the possibility of the transformations proposed by ROBINET (cf. § CXIX of *De hylozoismo*, cited *infra* in a footnote). Namely, ROBINET, in *De la nature* I–IV (1761), sets forth the doctrine of biological transformationalism: the Creator made only one "*Etre prototype de tous les Etres, dont ceux-ci ne sont que des Variations prodigieusement multipliées & diversifiées de toutes les manieres possibles.*" (Cited by PLOUCQUET under § LXVI of *De hylozoismo*, p. 28; *Septieme partie, livre premier* in ROBINET's book, vol. IV, p. 1.)

¹⁴⁰§ IX, p. 5. Cf. also § CXIX: "*Secundum nostra principia, Materia est imago realis a Deo formata, & Mundus materialis est Complexus imaginum realium. Imagines hae specie a se invicem differunt, ita quidem, ut una species in alteram nunquam transeat, seu, quod idem est, ut unus character primitivus nunquam transformetur in alium characterem primitivum.*" (P. 47.) The second part of this passage is directed against ROBINET's transformationalism (*De la nature*, 1761), a doctrine earlier propounded also by MAUPERTUIS (*Dissertatio inauguralis*, 1751, French version *Essai sur la formation des corps organisés*, 1754), later embraced by DIDEROT (*Le Rêve de d'Alembert*, publ. 1782 and *Physiologie*, manuscript of appr. 1780). All three authors, however, worked out significantly different versions of biological transformationalism.

¹⁴¹§ CXX, p. 47.

So far, this is in line with the tradition of the school. But there is at least one important development. PLOUCQUET rejects the Leibnizian doctrine that the monads do not exert an influence on the physical world,¹⁴² which is essentially the rejection of the whole system of *harmonia praestabilita*.¹⁴³ Hence, the activity of the monads will be free and true *mutual physical* commerce. With this, PLOUCQUET adopts a version of the natural philosophical position of *influxus physicus*, denounced by WOLFF & BAUMGARTEN:¹⁴⁴ the forces of all finite compound substances produce

¹⁴²It should be pointed out here that LEIBNIZ's position on the relationship between the intelligible world of the monads and the phenomenal world of bodies is a complex one. On the one hand, he asserts that the laws of the kingdom of final causes are different from those of the kingdom of the efficient causes: "*Les ames agissent selon les lois des causes finales par appetitions, fins et moyens. Les corps agissent selon les lois des causes efficientes ou des mouvements. Et les deux regnes, celui des causes efficientes et celui des causes finales, sont harmoniques entre eux.*" (*La Monadologie*), point 79; GERHARDT ed., 1965, vol. VI, p. 620.) The famed thesis that 'the monads do not have windows' (*La Monadologie*), point 7) implies that no effect may enter or leave the monad as an intrinsically determined metaphysical unit. Thus it seems that no influence or interaction is possible between the respectively intelligible and phenomenal worlds: they exist separately, though they are perfectly co-ordinated by God. But at the same time, LEIBNIZ also maintains that the principles of physical nature do not fall in the realm of bodies itself, but in that of the intelligible natures, so the intelligible world seems to have a one-way influence on the phenomenal world; cf. (*Discours de métaphysique*), point XVIII: "...*les principes generaux de la nature corporelle et de la mecanique même sont plutot metaphysiques que Geometriques, et appartiennent plutot à quelques formes ou natures indivisibles comme causes des apparences qu'à la masse corporelle ou étendue.*" (GERHARDT ed., 1965, vol. IV, p. 444.)

¹⁴³As we indicated under Section 4 of Chapter 2, the most substantial, middle part of the booklet is dedicated to an analysis of the philosophy of LEIBNIZ & that of ROBINET, respectively: the former is philosophically refuted, after a detailed presentation of his monadology, in §§ XL–LXIV; while the latter is practically made an object of ridicule in §§ LXV–CXVIII. Now PLOUCQUET brightly argues against LEIBNIZ that, since the monad is an isolated, self-sufficient metaphysical unit, even the doctrine of the *harmonia praestabilita* is insufficient for the monad cogently to conclude that external reality (of which it does not have experience-based knowledge) exists. This metaphysical difficulty, then, has the physical consequence that when the efficiency of the monads is considered, they will seem to operate blindly and in vain, for they do not exert any *physical influx* on each other. See, among other things, PLOUCQUET's anti-Leibnizian statement in § XLIV: "*Denique, si supponam, DEUM in me praestabilivisse seriem sensationum cum ipsis objectis externis harmonicam; nihilominus series rerum externarum mihi manet plane occulta, cum ab iisdem nulla ratione afficiar, nec ego in easdem operari possim.*" (P. 21.)

¹⁴⁴WOLFF discards the *systema influxus physici* in the *Psychologia rationalis*, §§ 721–722 and 726 (probably also elsewhere) on the ground that it does not explain the union of one particular soul with one particular body. On the other hand, BAUMGARTEN rejects the system of *influxus physicus universalis* (which he alternatively calls *influxus realis* as well) in §§ 450–451 of his *Metaphysica*. To BAUMGARTEN's mind, the *influxus physicus* hypothesis does not allow the substances of this world to be *active* whenever they undergo an influence *ab extra*. In his interpretation, the system of *influxus physicus* thus reduces the operations of the natural world to mechanically pre-determined chain-reactions. This entails, says BAUMGARTEN, that ultimately even the concept of force (*vis*), which implies the *active* operation of the subject, will have to be dropped in terms of the *influxus physicus* hypothesis: "§ 450. *Influxus realis substantiae mundi partis in aliam mundi partem est physicus. Hinc influxus physicus universalis est universalis substantiarum in mundo harmonia, qua una in alteram realiter influit...*

mutual physical changes in the other finite compound substances which enter into interaction with them. In this manner, they are even more perfect images of the *Virtus suprema*, which also sustains the universe through an *influxus realis*:

§ CXXII. *Since a force is not worth anything in the system of things, unless we attribute to it some influence on other forces (by which influence several different actions and reactions, passive conditions, and combats take place, phenomena emerge and disappear, and changes occur in the material system), it appears that all material things, without any exception, act upon each other.*¹⁴⁵

As it will have been perceived, however, PLOUCQUET never uses the expression ‘*influxus physicus*’ itself. The key term that expresses the novelty of his position is ‘*to act upon each other really*’ (‘*in se invicem realiter agere*’) or *influxus realis*. This, however, refers precisely to the essential characteristic content of the doctrine BAUMGARTEN and KANT name ‘*influxus physicus*’.¹⁴⁶

§ 451. *Systema influxus physici universalis non tollit harmoniam substantiarum mundi mutua eamque universalem, § 450, 48, sed praestabilitam, § 448. Non omnis, qui ponit substantias huius mundi in se mutuo influere, inter se conflagere, a se invicem pati, & utrunque posse corpora respectu spirituum, spiritus respectu corporum, immo se posse mutuo contingere, est influxionista universalis, § 449, 450. Influxionista universalis (1) negat ullam substantiam huius mundi, quando patitur ab alia substantia huius mundi, agere & passiones suas vi sua producere, § 450, 212. (2) ponit realiter passiones unius substantiae huius mundi produci ab altera substantia huius mundi in eam influente, § 450. Hinc per systema influxus physici universalis nulla substantia, pars mundi, in ullis suis mutationibus harmonicis agit vi propria, § 448.*” (Pp. 149–150; bold characters added.) In turn, under §§ 448–449, BAUMGARTEN describes the system of pre-established harmony as that of an *ideal* (i.e. not real) *influx* of the finite substances on each other. This implies that they *actively produce* even their passive conditions, which they experience as a result of the influence (causal operation) of other substances: “§ 448. ...*Influxus omnium substantiarum mundi in se invicem idealis est harmonia praestabilita universalis...* § 449. *Systema harmoniae praestabilitae universalis non tollit influxum substantiarum huius mundi in se invicem, sed eum ponit, § 448. non tollit unam mundi substantiam pati ab altera, § 448, 212. sed quamlibet tamen mutationem suam, quam ab altera substantia huius mundi patitur, vi sua producere ponit, § 210. non tollit partium huius mundi conflictum mutuum, § 213. facultatem receptivitatemque actionum transeuntium, § 217. multo minus influxum substantiae infinitae, receptivitatemque illius influxus in finitis, § 448. Non solum non tollit agere posse spiritus in corpora, & corpora in spiritus, sed ponit etiam in hoc mundo corpora & spiritus in se mutuo influere, § 408, 434. seque posse mutuo contingere, § 223, 409.*” (Pp. 148–149; bold characters added.) All considered, however, BAUMGARTEN’s argument for the philosophical superiority of the system of pre-established harmony is not convincing, for it blurs the fundamental difference between *real* (i.e. *physical*) and *ideal* commerce (cf. § 445), between finite substances in this world.

¹⁴⁵§ CXXII. *Cum Vis in nexu rerum nihil prosit, nisi ipsi concedatur influxus quidam in vires alias, quo influxu variae actiones & reactiones, lactae, origines & interitus phaenomenorum, & alterationes in systemate materiali nascuntur: apparet, res materiales, nulla excepta, in se invicem agere.*” (P. 47. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) On the *influxus realis* of the *virtus infinita*, cf. § XII, cited *supra*.

¹⁴⁶In LEIBNIZ, however, the term *realis* refers, in respect of the phenomenal world of bodies, to the “*Fundiertheit des Phänomenalen im Substantiellen*” (see GURWITSCH, p. 417), and to reality understood as a perfection, in respect of the intelligible world of the monads. In other words, it has a fundamentally different, metaphysical meaning, not to be confused with the sense in which BAUMGARTEN and PLOUCQUET use the term in the present natural philosophical context.

The world is, therefore, essentially a system of representations or, as we might put it, a system of signs (as it were a language), in which the finite individual constituents enjoy a higher degree of independent activity than for the school, and physical efficiency. The universe is a dynamic and live, if not fully animate, system of forces, each of them representing the first efficient cause in its own characteristic manner.¹⁴⁷ It is this universal efficient cause or *vis infinita* that creates this finite manifestation of itself, and allows for the finite created spirits to understand infinity by their capacity of reflexion. This standpoint clearly resembles the ultimate interpretation of nature in the Wolffian-Baumgartenian school:

§ CXXIII. *Since GOD produced the world in order to manifest it to the minds, and in order that they, in so far as the nature of bodies allows it, can intuit the divine perfections and powers as manifested in matter, it is clear by itself that the nature of minds is so framed that they can exert influence and can act upon matter, and that they are able to be influenced and affected by matter.*¹⁴⁸

Creation is for the Created to know the Uncreated, and for the Uncreated to show itself to the Created: a complex relation of unequals in which one side attends to the other, and the other reflects the one. The natural philosophical picture of the world accompanying this fundamental metaphysical thesis is one of a universe replete with mechanical and intellectual, antagonistic and sympathetic forces, which, at the order of the Supreme Being, all conspire to build a unified system. As the closing § CXXIX sums it up: “*Thus, the universe is full of forces, attractive, repelling, vegetative, sensory, intellective, co-operating, struggling and other forces, which the Wisest Being called to existence on the grounds that they were the most suitable to form a system.*”¹⁴⁹

9 A Systematic Confrontation of the General anima mundi Theory with the Theology of Causal Divine Presence of the Leibnizian Tradition

After this schematic presentation and analysis of the theology of causal divine presence of the *Schulphilosophie*, it is possible to pinpoint what the early German Romantics could see as a theoretical shortcoming of the Leibnizian-Wolffian

¹⁴⁷In the text of *De hylozoismo*, PLOUCQUET does not distinguish between ‘live’ forces and ‘dead’ forces.

¹⁴⁸“§ CXXIII. *Cum DEUS mundum eo fine produxerit, ut spiritibus idem manifestaretur, ac ut iidem (scil. spiritūs) Perfectiones & Vires Divinas, quantum e natura corporum fieri potest, in materia manifestatas intueantur; per se liquet, spirituum naturam ita esse constitutam, ut hi influere possint & realiter agere in materiam, nec non a materia pati possint & affici.*” (P. 47. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

¹⁴⁹“*Ita Universum Viribus est plenum, attractivis, repulsivis, vegetativis, sensitivis, intellectivis, conspirantibus, repugnantibus, & reliquis, quas Ens Sapientissimum ad systema formandum convenientissimas existere jussit.*” (P. 48. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

theology. The following philosophical confrontation may offer insight into why the world soul theories could gain, as a matter of historical fact, the upper hand over traditional natural theology and why they could run parallel, in chronological terms, even with the Kantian critically examined, transcendental theology. Here we take more distance from the question than at the end of [Section 7](#), where we already tentatively put forward some relevant issues.

A general philosophical advantage of a broadly formulated *anima mundi* theory over a theology of causal divine presence seems to be that it has a more evident rationale of the *collective* unity of the cosmos. If the world is considered as a single animate being, by virtue of a unique universal soul that spirates life into it, then there is a readily understandable logical ground to say (by an analogical argument from empirical psychology) that the universe is not an *ab extra* coordinated totality of autarchic finite substances, but an organically sympathetic unit. Though a possible counter-argument of the *Schulphilosophie* is that the unicity of the extramundane efficient cause ensures the unified character of the world, this is, in turn, counterpoised by the degree of independence (autarchy) finite things enjoy in the metaphysical system of monadology. The world, for LEIBNIZ, remains an aggregate of autarchic substances in pre-established consent. Thus, in the Leibnizian metaphysical system, the degree of autarchy of the finite substances does not allow the world to be other than a *distributive* unit.

In respect of the historical relationship between Leibnizian monadology and early German Romantic metaphysical tendencies, this also means that the *anima mundi* theory as a philosophical guarantee of the *collective* unity of the world could help to corroborate the doctrine of the *dependence* of the individual subject on the all-embracing supra-individual and unified whole that is universal Nature. It seems a fundamental Romantic metaphysical tendency first to posit the Self in its individuality, and then to reintroduce it into the interpretative context of its species and Nature. The reinsertion of the Self into the context of the world is supported by the natural philosophical theory of the world soul, which demonstrates the existence of a material being that physically penetrates and so interlinks all human individuals as well. The *anima mundi*-hypothesis will thus appear as a natural philosophical instrument that dialectically prevents the isolation of the individual human soul from the community of souls, and from Nature.

The Romantic Self, its autarchy over-emphasized, will more intensively seek to regard itself as a subordinate part of a *collective* whole, in order to avoid definitive isolation (or even solipsism). The a priori logical rationale of the Romantic position of the Self is that the definition of an individual depends on the definition of the species. The principle of identity is essentially the principle of the exclusion of other individuals of the same class. The position of a Self relies on the position of its class, while the position of the class relies on the position of the higher genera, ultimately on the position of the world.

Hence, the general *anima mundi* theory may be seen, in historical terms, as a German Romantic reaction against the very principle of monadology. The metaphysical development PLOUCQUET carried out on the Leibnizian system was essentially to the same effect in that it reinforced the principle of real (physical)

interaction among the monads.¹⁵⁰ Yet this metaphysical development could not satisfy a new generation of sensitive thinkers, who no longer perceived (or minded) the logical contradictions their mentors pointed out in the arguments in favour of a world soul. The early German Romantics (especially BAADER and SCHELLING but to some extent also SCHLEIERMACHER, the author of *Herakleitos der dunkle*), by elaborating positive, even experimentally demonstrated theories about the world soul, voiced a philosophical aspiration for a more complex metaphysical scheme in which the Self does not lose its identity by being an organically incorporated part in a collective whole. The individual's belonging to such a whole presupposes a different interpretation of the principle of identity, which in this case will somehow allow of the Plotinian simultaneous presence of the many and the one in the same subject. This understanding of the principle of identity is certainly more sympathetic with or conducive to theorizing about a world soul.

What the Wolffian-Baumgartenian theory of causal divine presence makes possible, in metaphysical terms, is an *adjacency* of the Finite and the Infinite: the one borders on the other, while specific limited effects of the Infinite filter through, according to a pre-determined pattern of representation, into the Finite. This happens in the same way as the Sun dries up the humid soil of the garden *ab extra*, without being present *inside* the soil, to use another Wolffian metaphor.¹⁵¹ As we have put it before, this means that God's Providence (sustaining activity, continuous creation) is directed *into* the world. At the same time, the world as a manifestation of God also reflects, or attends to, God. The highest finite intellectual being, man, is obliged by God to recognize divine power and glory through the medium of the world. Hence, in the Wolffian-Baumgartenian theology of *per eminentia* divine presence, God and Nature are in a relation of metaphysical adjacency (causal connection) and mutual attention *without* penetration.

The radical novelty of the early German Romantic philosophy of nature (especially in SCHELLING) will be the thesis of a substantial *interpenetration* of Finite and Infinite. This enhances the real ("situational") presence of God in nature, as God is no longer seen as an efficient but as an immanent cause of "Creation". In this new conception, the world soul will mediate between God and the lower realities: material Nature and the "world of spirits" (*Geisterwelt*), so God can condescend to and penetrate the entire universe. This reinterpretation of the act of Creation propounds the identity of theology and cosmogony, an entirely new insight in philosophical theology.

After these considerations, however, we still have a long intellectual journey to make before we arrive at the positively conceived *anima mundi*-theories of the early German Romantics. In [Part II](#), our way leads to eighteenth-century cosmology- and biology-based theology.

¹⁵⁰The introduction of real (physical) interaction (*influxus physicus*) among the monads entails the reduction of their autarchy and metaphysical isolation from each other.

¹⁵¹Cf. the note to § 1046 of *Theologiae naturalis Pars I*, 2: "*Monuimus jam supra (not. § 1019), ex actione entis unius in alterum praesentiam concludi eodem sensu, quo hortulanus arbori praesens dicitur, ex qua surculos gemmis gravidis destitutos resecat, & Sol terram exsiccans horto praesens est.*" (See also *supra*, [Section 7](#); eds. ÉCOLE & al., II. Abt., vol. 7.2, p. 1019.)

Part II

**“*Les Naturalistes*” – Eighteenth-Century
Physico-Theology: The Scientific
Demonstration of the Existence and
Attributes of God from the Teleology of
Nature. The World Soul Theory in
Physico-Theology. Physico-Theology As a
Source of Inspiration for the Early
German Romantics**

Chapter 4

Preliminary Historical and Conceptual Presentation of “*L’Histoire Naturelle*” in Selected Major Works of some Leading Naturalists. The Relation of Natural Science to Theology or Spirituality in their Works

1 *Definition of the Key Concepts: “Les Naturalistes” and “Physico-Theology”*

As we have anticipated under [Section 1](#) of Chapter 1, the more or less homogeneous group of natural scientists called, in French, “*les naturalistes*”, enjoyed a very high reputation in their time. Vast numbers of readers became acquainted with their works, which were frequently translated into other languages as well (cf. the books of e.g. DERHAM or NIEUWENTYT). The French term “*naturaliste*” meant, at the time, a “natural scientist interested mainly in geology and biology”. In the grand *Encyclopédie*, DIDEROT defines the word in the following manner: “*Applied to a person who has studied nature and who is versed in the knowledge of natural things, especially concerning metals, minerals, stones, plants and animals.*”¹

¹“*Se dit d’une personne qui a étudié la nature et qui est versée dans la connaissance des choses naturelles, particulièrement de ce qui concerne les métaux, les minéraux, les pierres, les végétaux et les animaux.*” (Article “*Naturaliste*”, written by DIDEROT, of the *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*; DIECKMANN and VARLOOT eds., vol. VIII, p. 49. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) Importantly, the term had two further meanings in contemporary scientific discourse, one in French and one in Latin. DIDEROT himself defines its second meaning at the end of the same article, as follows: “*On donne encore le nom de **naturalistes** à ceux qui n’admettent point de Dieu, mais qui croient qu’il n’y a qu’une substance matérielle, revêtue de diverses qualités qui lui sont aussi essentielles que la longueur, la largeur, la profondeur, et en conséquence desquelles tout s’exécute nécessairement dans la nature comme nous le voyons; **naturaliste** en ce sens est synonyme à **athée, spinoziste, matérialiste**, etc.*” (*Ibidem*, pp. 480–48; bold characters by DIDEROT.) It appears, then, that DIDEROT was a “*naturaliste*” in both the first and the second sense (“*matérialiste*”) of the word. Thirdly, then, the corresponding term in Latin (“*naturalista*”) was applied, roughly in the same period of time, to theologians who did not rely on revelation, but rested content with natural theology; cf. § 20 of WOLFF’s *Theologiae naturalis Pars I*, 1: “*Naturalistae enim sunt, qui Theologia naturali contenti revelatam vel rejiciunt, vel saltem cognitu minus necessariam judicant.*”

BUFFON’s preliminary definition about the *science* of *histoire naturelle* clearly indicates the immensity, or better, infinity of this scientific study:

Natural History, taken in its full extension, is an immense study; it covers all the objects that the universe exposes to our sight. This prodigious multitude of quadrupeds, birds, insects, plants, minerals etc. offers to the curiosity of the human mind a vast scene, which is, in its entirety, so grand that it appears and is in fact inexhaustible in its details.²

It must be added, however, that judging by our sources themselves, the science of astronomy was also considered to belong in the sphere of “natural history”.

The great majority of the representatives of *histoire naturelle* were monotheists, and they only prohibitively or metaphorically talked,³ if they talked at all, about a universal soul in their works. Nonetheless, they are an important part in our study because, as a matter of historical fact,⁴ they instigated the upcoming generation to seek after the divine presence in the phenomenal world also with the instruments of natural science, and to draw metaphysical conclusions about the relation of the finite with the infinite on the basis of physical-experimental research. We will return to more about this at the end of the present [Part II](#), under [Section 12](#) of [Chapter 5](#).

One might say that most naturalists considered it their pious or religious task to put their scientific findings to profit in the defence of religion and devotion. But, there was a minority (scientifically led, in France, by the prolific DIDEROT) among them that, on the contrary, formulated theories of life and of the soul to demonstrate the likeliness of the non-existence of a God and of the soul (atheistic vitalism). This numerical minority, however, played an enormous role in the eighteenth-century natural sciences (not to mention in probabilistic metaphysics and moral philosophy) insofar as they published their biological, physiological and related views in the great *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* and in GRIMM’s *Correspondance littéraire*, among other forums. Hence, not all naturalists are physico-theologists, while all physico-theologists are, to some extent, naturalists. For a preliminary idea of what physico-theology is, we now turn to a popular representative of this intellectual movement.

“What is man?” The words of Psalm 8:4 incite physico-theologist Abbé PLUCHE to start a devout train of thought on account of David, who is portrayed as a simple herdsman in the title engraving of part 5 of PLUCHE’s *Schau-Platz der*

²“L’Histoire naturelle, prise dans toute son étendue, est une histoire immense; elle embrasse tous les objets que nous présente l’univers. Cette multitude prodigieuse de quadrupèdes, d’oiseaux, de poissons, d’insectes, de plantes, de minéraux, etc., offre à la curiosité de l’esprit humain un vaste spectacle, dont l’ensemble est si grand, qu’il paraît et qu’il est en effet inépuisable dans ses détails.” (*De la manière d’étudier et de traiter l’histoire naturelle*, in BUFFON, tome I, p. 91. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

³Cf. FÉNELON’s *Traité de l’existence de Dieu* (1763) I/29, 70 and 89; see our [Section 2](#).

⁴Cf. the numerous explicit references to several different works of several different naturalists in, e.g., BAADER’s *Vom Wärmestoffe* or in SCHELLING’s *Von der Weltseele*, both in the main texts and the footnotes.

Natur (*The view of nature*, 1750).⁵ As PLUCHE says, David, traditionally considered the author of the Psalms:

...wonders at the great might given to man, and in the quiet night-time, sings of the unspeakable grace of Him who gave so many good things to man. The pale moonlight allows him to behold a part of them. ...In their pen, his sheep warm up the land he wants to till, and the Pleiades show him, by virtue of their position, the hour in which he has to let the sheep into another pen. The entire Earth is ready to satisfy his will, and even the sky revolves at the service of man.⁶

This pious introduction to a volume of one of the most popular French physico-theologists of the eighteenth century may give us a preliminary idea of what physico-theology is, and what role religious awe might play in it. Classical eighteenth-century physico-theology is a science which intends to prove the existence and the chief attributes (omniscience, omnipotence, bounty) of God by systematically pointing out, with natural scientific means, that the physical universe displays manifest signs of deliberate purposeful planning. On this account, the physico-theological argument is also called the ‘argument from design’. Had the universe been produced by mere chance, it would not be bearing evident signs of intelligent design; thus, it must have been made and ordered by virtue of divine premeditation, i.e., by the considered choice of the most perfect being, God. In its classical early modern form, physico-theology thus posits the operation of supernaturally determined final causes in order to explain natural teleology, whereby it makes a philosophically argued transition from nature to the supernatural condition of nature. While our citation from Abbé PLUCHE does not yet reveal the strictly natural scientific character of the fundament of the physico-theological argument (we shall see that below), it does show in outline how the authors belonging in this tradition argued from the purposeful arrangement of all created things (in favour of man) to the existence of an all-good and almighty God, and how the science of physico-theology begins in religious wonder at the pervasive order of Creation.

As we shall see, other distinctive features of eighteenth-century physico-theology are the outspokenly edifying tenor of its (moral) theological conclusions, and its tendency, poeticallyspiritually and sometimes even homiletically, to elaborate on the metaphysical final result of its natural scientific enquiry: the existence of God. Eighteenth-century physico-theology is, hence, generally speaking, a natural science in the service of (systematic and even pastoral) theology and religion, spirituality and devotion. It is a natural science the ultimate aim of which

⁵German translation (Vienna and Nuremberg, 1748–1750) of PLUCHE’s *The view of nature* (*Le spectacle de la nature*), on which see below.

⁶“...bewundert die grosse Gewalt, welche dem Menschen gegeben ist, und besinget bey stiller Nachtzeit die unaussprechliche Gnade des Gebers so vieler Güter. Der helle Mondenschein lässt ihn einen Theil davon betrachten. ...Seine Schaafte erwärmen in ihrem Pferche das Land, das er bestellen will, und das Siebengestirne zeigt ihm durch seine Stellung die Stunde, wenn er die Schaafte in einen andern Pferch lassen soll. Die ganze Erde ist fertig, seinem Willen ein Genüge zu thun, und der Himmel selber verrichtet seinen Umlauff zu des Menschen Dienste.” (*Ibid.*, p. X 2 verso; transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

is the scientific-argumentative reinforcement of the believer in his or her faith, and the conversion of the atheist or non-believer (sometimes, of the deist) to a broadly conceived Christian creed.

In the chapters that follow, we shall first try to give a systematic historical introduction to the sources of eighteenth-century physico-theology. Then we shall give an idea of the natural scientific valour of this ideological movement by adumbrating, as an example, the new cosmological picture of the world physico-theology advocated and relied on. This is to reveal physico-theology as a natural science, and to show that despite its explicit ideological pledge, it was no retrograde or subprime strand in respect of scientific value in the palette of the then existing natural scientific attitudes. Next, we present and analyze the philosophical core of the physico-theological argument, examining, as well, three counter-arguments (the problem of evil, the hylozoistic alternative, and KANT’s criticism) that may be set against it. Besides the classical question concerning the cogency of the physico-theological argument for the existence and attributes of God, we shall be interested, throughout this particular investigation, in what physico-theology taught about the soul of the world, and how it influenced the early German Romantics.

2 Major Sources of Eighteenth-Century Physico-Theology

It seems likely that the term ‘physico-theology’ had been coined by W. CHARLETON, whose book, *The darkness of atheism dispelled by the light of nature* (London 1652), carried the subtitle, *A physico-theological treatise*.⁷ The origins of early modern physico-theology thus go back to the middle and late seventeenth century.⁸ The first two authors (see following paragraphs) our enquiry covers still belong to the century of LOCKE, who also tried his hand in physico-theology in one of his early *Essays on the Law of Nature* (*Quaestiones de lege naturae*, eight scholastic questions composed in Latin around 1660).⁹ We briefly characterize the other, chief physico-theological sources in chronological order.

Matthew BARKER’s *Natural Theology, or, the Knowledge of God, from the Works of Creation, Accomodated, and Improved, to the Service of Christianity* (London 1674) tells us about the ideological objectives of its author already in its title. In accordance with the title, BARKER’s chief scriptural reference is to Romans 1:20, where St. Paul sets down, as it were, the very principle of physico-theological

⁷Cf. HWP, vol. 7, article *Physikotheologie* (S. LORENZ), pp. 948, 952. Among the precursors of the XVIIIth-century physico-theological movement, the author cites S. PARKER’s *Physico-theological Attempts concerning God* (*Tentamina Physico-Theologica De Deo*, London, 1665) as well, which we could not consult.

⁸W. SCHRÖDER too is of the opinion that modern physico-theology was only taking shape in the seventeenth century (SCHRÖDER 1998, 193).

⁹See Essay II on *Whether the law of nature is knowable by the light of nature? (An lex naturae sit lumine naturali cognoscibilis?)*, in VON LEYDEN ed. (see bibliography), pp. 122–132, esp. 132.

research as he professes the fundamental theological thesis that “*the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead*”.¹⁰ Though in terms of natural scientific quality, BARKER’s 220-page-long treatise does not compare to the physico-theological achievement of later, professional naturalists, it clearly follows the inferential pattern of the argument from design as it asserts that “*when we see all things in Nature in motion, and every wheel of Nature moving to a rational end, we may conclude, this was done by some Infinite Intelligence*.”¹¹

John RAY’s *The Wisdom of God Manifested in the Works of the Creation* (London 1691) lays great stress on the religious awe the scholar feels for “*the admirable Art and Wisdom that discovers itself in the make and constitution, the order and disposition, the ends and uses of all the parts and members of this stately fabrick of Heaven and Earth*.”¹² An educated and cultivated philosopher, RAY defends the operation of final causes in creation,¹³ and in harmony with that, rejects the respectively Epicurean and Cartesian mechanical cosmogonies.¹⁴

Archbishop FÉNELON (1651–1715), well-known, among other things, by reason of the *pur amour*-debate he fought with BOSSUET as well as for his violent and anonymous *Lettre à Louis XIV*, composed his treatise about the existence of God, *Traité de l’existence de Dieu*, toward the end of his life, in 1713. This work, which is to some extent Cartesian (cf. methodic doubt, II/1–15, metaphysical arguments for the existence of God, II/24–37),¹⁵ and to some extent Malebranchian in metaphysics (cf. the doctrine of the *vision en Dieu*, II/50 and 61),¹⁶ consists of two parts, the first of which is a systematic physico-theology. FÉNELON, here, philosophically concentrates on the refutation of cosmogonical Epicureanism, i.e., the doctrine which derives the teleological order of the natural universe from blind chance

¹⁰ Cf. p. 1 in BARKER’s *Natural Theology* (see bibliography), and the entire Chapter I.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 22 (BARKER’s emphases).

¹² RAY (see bibliography), p. 12.

¹³ Consider, e.g., the following argument: “*Seeing... That the Eye is employed by Man and all Animals for the use of Vision, which, as they are framed, is so necessary for them, that they could not live without it; and God Almighty knew that it would be so; and seeing it is so admirably fitted and adapted to this use, that all the Wit and Art of men and Angels could not have contrived it better...; it must needs be highly absurd and unreasonable to affirm, either that it was not designed at all for this use, or that it is impossible for man to know whether it was or not.*” (*Ibid.*, p. 22.)

¹⁴ Cf. pp. 13–40.

¹⁵ A clear Cartesian influence is also present, in the *Traité de l’existence de Dieu*, in the field of physiology; cf. FÉNELON’s theory of digestion and the animal spirits, I/24 & 31 etc.

¹⁶ On several crucial points, however, FÉNELON opposes MALEBRANCHE. To MALEBRANCHE’s mind, for instance, God’s objective with the creation of the world has only been the glorification of Himself (cf. *Traité de la nature et de la grace*, I/i/1& passim), so God aims at the benefit of man not essentially but only accidentally, through the medium of the world – confer in this respect also FÉNELON’s *Réfutation du système du P. Malebranche* (comp. 1687, publ. 1820), ch. XXII. Then again, FÉNELON differs from MALEBRANCHE on the arduous doctrine of predestination as well – see on this account FÉNELON’s *Traité de l’existence de Dieu*, I/67–68, and his *Réfutation du système du P. Malebranche*, ch. XXVIII; etc.

(I/75–77 etc.). The *positive* formulation of his thesis is that the general teleology of the natural processes is perfectly fine-tuned for the benefit of man. We notice admirable, superior art (*art*) and skill (*industrie*) in the internal structure and external concatenation of natural substances, so it is reasonable to conclude that an inconceivably great wisdom (*sagesse*) and power (*puissance*) has constructed and ordered them as well as keeps them in operation. This version of the physico-theological argument yields a concept of God considered as the source of proportion, measure and moderation in, and as the First Mover of, the phenomenal world. In other words, God is represented here essentially as the coordinator and mover, and only accidentally as the Creator, of nature. As concerns the movement and change of natural objects, FÉNELON ultimately draws the conclusion that God is the only real and immediate efficient cause in all natural change (“*l’unique cause réelle et immédiate de toutes les différentes modifications des corps*”)¹⁷ – a Malebranchian position again. This action or influence of God is often described by FÉNELON in somewhat naively materialistic terms (he repeatedly refers to “the hand of God,” “*la main de Dieu*,” as if it was immediately directing and controlling the course of nature), though his argumentation is otherwise very far from being rudimentary. FÉNELON is, furthermore, perhaps the only physico-theologist who explicitly deals with, and offers a philosophical solution to, the problem of evil (cf. part I, ch. 88).

In the context of our investigation, FÉNELON deserves particular attention because he is the only physico-theologist who takes a position on the world soul hypothesis. His attitude is nuanced on this subject. He rejects the real identification of God with the universal soul, but avails himself of a metaphorical identification: God *is* not the soul of the world, but He is *as if* the soul of the world insofar as He is the only real and immediate efficient cause in all natural change. Whereas ancient philosophy, contends FÉNELON, believed that the whole world *is* a single animal animated by a divine soul, we may contend the same in a *quasi*-modality:

(I/29) Ancient philosophy... taught... that the divine spirit, spread out in the entire universe, is a superior wisdom that acts incessantly in the entire nature, and chiefly in the animals, in the same manner as the souls act in the bodies, and that this continuous influence of the divine spirit... is the life of all that is living. ...

This divine wisdom, which moves all known parts of the universe, impressed the Stoics so deeply, and, before them, even Plato, that they believed that the entire world is a living being, but a rational living being, a philosopher, a sage, all in all, the Supreme Deity.¹⁸ This philosophy reduced the host of Gods to a single god, and this single god to Nature, which was conceived eternal, infallible, intelligent, omnipotent and divine.

(I/70) *The heavens, the earth, the stars, the plants, the animals, our bodies, our minds: everything points to an order, an exact measure, an art, a wisdom, a mind*

¹⁷ I/67; DUMAS ed., p. 68.

¹⁸ In this sentence, FÉNELON seems to suggest that even PLATO identified the world soul with ‘the supreme god’. This might be due to an unlucky syntactic construction, as it is hard to believe that FÉNELON really interpreted the text of the *Timaios* in this manner.

superior to ours, which is like the soul of the entire world, and which directs everything toward the objectives it has set, with a soft and unnoticeable but omnipotent force.

(1/89) Poetry simply attributed to the inanimate beings the intentions of the Creator, who carries out everything in them. The more we contemplate, without prejudice, the entire nature, the more we discover an inexhaustible storehouse of wisdom, which is like the soul of the world.¹⁹

FÉNELON goes along, at the greatest possible length, with the world soul theory when he conceives of God as the unique motive and vegetative power that ‘carries out everything in every creature’ (“*qui fait tout en elles*”). It will be necessary to demonstrate the *transcendence* of God if the Christian concept of God is to be safeguarded and delimited from that of the universal soul. FÉNELON realizes that project in the second part of his treatise, in the famed chapter III, entitled “*Réfutation du Spinozisme*”.

The Dutch Bernard NIEUWENTYT, Doctor in Mathematics, is perhaps the first really systematic physico-theologist whose work, *The right way of using the contemplations of the world* (*Het regt gebruik der werelt beschouwingen*, 1714), may be considered the ideal type of physico-theological treatise. As its full title reveals,²⁰ the ponderous volume was intended to convince two categories of people: the *ongodisten* or atheists, of the existence, wisdom and goodness of God; and the *ongelovigen* or, in NIEUWENTYT’s own definition, the deists, of the

¹⁹“(1/29) La philosophie des anciens... vouloit... que l’esprit divin, répandu dans tout l’univers, fût une sagesse supérieure qui agit sans cesse dans toute la nature, et surtout dans les animaux, comme les ames agissent dans les corps, et que cette impression continuelle de l’esprit divin... fût la vie de tout ce qui vit. ... Cette sagesse divine, qui meut toutes les parties connues du monde, avoit tellement frappé les Stoïciens, et, avant eux, Platon, qu’ils croyaient que le monde entier étoit un animal, mais un animal raisonnable, philosophe, sage, enfin le Dieu suprême. Cette philosophie réduisoit la multitude des dieux à un seul, et ce seul dieu, à la nature, qui étoit éternelle, infaillible, intelligente, toute-puissante et divine. (1/70) Les cieux, la terre, les astres, les plantes, les animaux, nos corps, nos esprits; tout marque un ordre, une mesure précise, un art, une sagesse, un esprit supérieur à nous, qui est comme l’ame du monde entier, et qui mène tout à ses fins avec une force douce et insensible, mais toute-puissante. (1/89) La poésie n’a fait qu’attribuer aux créatures inanimées le dessein du Créateur, qui fait tout en elles. ... Plus on contemple sans prévention toute la nature, plus on y découvre partout un fonds inépuisable de sagesse, qui est comme l’ame de l’univers.” (Respectively pp. 38–39, 70, and 88 in ed. DUMAS. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting added.)

²⁰*The right way of using the contemplations of the world, proposed in order that the atheists and non-believers may be convinced* (*Het regt gebruik der werelt beschouwingen, ter overtuiging van ongodisten en ongelovigen angetoont, door Bernard Nieuwentyt*; we have used the fifth edition of 1730, Amsterdam, good 900 pages). As the title indicates, the book is a series of contemplations of nature, each of them closely followed by its proper physico-theological interpretation. It was the French version that became world-famed – even KANT and ROUSSEAU refer to it. In this, NIEUWENTYT totally rearranged the material, and changed the title of the book, which now became *The existence of God demonstrated by the marvels of nature, in three parts; where the structure of the human body, the elements, the stars and the several different effects of these are discussed* (*L’existence de Dieu, démontrée par les merveilles de la nature, en trois parties; Ou l’on Traite de la Structure du Corps de l’Homme, des Elemens, des Astres, et de leurs divers effets* ¹⁷²⁵; we have used the third edition of 1760). The name of the translator (probably NIEUWENTYT himself) is not indicated.

authority of Scripture (and, therefore, of the truth of the Christian religion).²¹ This natural science-based apology of Christian faith relies on the demonstration of the purposive functioning of the human body, the natural elements, natural laws, chemical and astronomical objects. In each case, the author points out the impossibility of the supposition that the natural phenomenon at stake could have been produced or teleologically ordered by any other agent than an omnipotent and omniscient God.

The distinguished William DERHAM, holder of the chair established by the equally pious natural philosopher Robert BOYLE for the defence of the Christian religion, authored the eponymous book of the movement: *Physico-theology Or, a Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God from his Works of Creation* (London 1713, many further editions).²² DERHAM, essentially an astronomer, published a continuation to this work 2 years later, under the title, *Astro-theology: Or a Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God From a Survey of the Heavens*.²³ DERHAM was a professional natural scientist at the cutting edge of the astronomical research of the time who, in the *Astro-theology*, floated the idea that our solar system (let alone planet Earth) is not in the centre of the universe; consequently, he rejected the “*old vulgar Opinion, that all things were made for Man*”.²⁴ Though this contradicts, e.g., Abbé PLUCHE’s more archaic conviction, DERHAM is nonetheless a true physico-theologist as he argues, admiring the works of creation, that:

...this glorious Scene of GOD’s works, the Heavens, plainly demonstrate the Workman’s infinite Wisdom to contrive, his Omnipotency to make, and his infinite Goodness in being

²¹We read the following in the dedication *To the reader (Aan den lezer, p. XX)*: “*The objective with which these contemplations have been written is to convince atheists of the wisdom, power and bounty of their God, the wonderful Maker and Governor of the universe; and to convince non-believers, who do acknowledge a God but by no means the authority of the Holy Scriptures, of the suprahuman origin of the Scriptures; and so to show both these kinds of people the right way of using the contemplations of the world.*” (“*Het oogmerk, waar mede dese Beschouwingen geschreven zyn, is om Ongodisten van de Wysheit, Magt en Goedheit van haren Godt, den aanbiddelyken Maker en Bestierder van het Geheel-Al; en Ongelovigen, die wel eenen Godt, dogh geensints het gesagh der H. Schriften erkennen, van de Bovenmenschelyke afkomst der Schrifture te overtuigen: en dus aan haar beide het regt gebruik der Wereld-Beschouwinge aan te toonen.*”)

²²French edition: *Théologie physique etc.*, 1726.

²³French edition: *Théologie astronomique ou démonstration de l’existence et des attributs de Dieu, par l’examen et la description des cieux* (some 200 pages). This translation, which does not indicate the translator’s name, was based on the fifth English edition (1726), and came out in Paris 1729.

²⁴*Astro-Theology*, p. 39 (emphasis by DERHAM); cf. *Physico-Theology*, p. 55, footnote 3. – On account of DERHAM’s and NIEUWENTYT’s new physico-theological approach, W. SCHRÖDER emphasizes “*die Innovation der modernen Physikotheologie..., die nicht vom Nutzen der übrigen Geschöpfe für den Menschen, sondern von der Komplexität und Funktionalität des Weltsystems und seiner Subsysteme (vor allem der Sphäre des Lebendigen) auf einen göttlichen Urheber schloß. ...die Physikotheologie des frühen 18. Jahrhunderts... (hatte) den Anthropozentrismus der älteren, erbaulichen Naturbetrachtung weit hinter sich gelassen. ... Derhams Teleologiekonzept ist nicht anthropozentrisch, sondern ‘biozentrisch.’ Der Beweisgrund, der uns auf die »Wisdom, Power, and Goodness of the infinite Creator« schließen läßt, ist... die Tatsache, daß die Natur so eingerichtet ist, daß sie der »Vielfalt der Geschöpfe« Lebensmöglichkeiten bietet...*” (SCHRÖDER 1998, 200–202.)

*so indulgent to all the Creatures, as to contrive and order all his Works for their good. For what less than Infinite could effect all those grand things, which I have... shewn to be manifest in the Heavens?*²⁵

The great systematic Leibnizian scholar, Christian WOLFF, contributed to the physico-theological movement with his *Rational Thoughts Concerning the Purposes of Natural Things* (*Vernünfftige Gedancken von den Absichten der natürlichen Dinge*, Halle 1724),²⁶ which stands out from the crowd by virtue of its philosophical quality. In this respect, only the early KANT compares to WOLFF, who continued these thoughts with a second volume about the teleology of the bodily organs of humans, animals and plants (*Vernünfftige Gedancken von dem Gebrauche der Theile in Menschen, Thieren und Pflanzen*, Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1725).²⁷ In the work about ‘the purposes of natural things’, a book concerned with the final causes operating in nature, he affirms that the overall objective God wanted to achieve with the creation of the physical universe is His self-glorification in the eyes of the creatures. This chief objective entails that the world is, as it were, a mirror of the divine perfections: “...the main objective of the world is to reveal the magnificence of God, i.e., that God decided to bring forth the world... in order that one may come to know His perfections from it...”²⁸

The physico-theological bestseller of the time was written by Abbé Noël-Antoine PLUCHE under the title, *The view of nature, or dialogues concerning the peculiarities of natural history which seemed the most adapted to raise the curiosity of young people, and to form their mind* (*Le spectacle de la nature, ou entretiens sur les particularités de l’histoire naturelle, qui ont paru les plus propres à rendre les Jeuns-Gens curieux, & à leur former l’esprit*, Paris 1732–1742).²⁹ Formally a dialogue composed for the education of the well-to-do youth, the nine little volumes of this book survey the generation and organization of plants and animals,

²⁵ *Astro-Theology*, p. 210. The apologetic character of the *Astro-theology* is made clear also by DERHAM’s statement at the end of the *Preliminary Discourse* (p. lviii): “And now for a Conclusion, I shall only intreat all my Readers to join with me in their earnest Prayers, that as this Work is designed for the good of Mankind, particularly for the Conviction of Infidels, for the Promotion of the Fear and Honour of God, and the cultivating of true Religion, so it may have its desired Effect.”

²⁶ Further editions: ²1727, ⁴1741, ⁵1752.

²⁷ WOLFF further composed the physico-theological treatise *On the method of demonstrating the existence of God from the order of nature* (*De methodo existentiam Dei ex ordine naturae demonstrandi*) in 1731.

²⁸ “...die Haupt-Absicht der Welt die Offenbarung der Herrlichkeit GOTTes sey, das ist, daß GOTT die Welt deswegen hervorbringen beschlossen, ...damit man seine Vollkommenheiten daraus erkennen möchte...” (part I, chapter I, § 2; p. 2. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

²⁹ First edition 1732–1742 (anonymous); second edition 1735–1752 (also anonymous). Further editions started in e.g. 1763, 1789 etc., with different number of volumes in different editions. We have consulted the first and the second editions. – A German translation was published in 1748–1750, under the title *View of nature, or: Dialogues concerning the constitution and ends of natural things, whereby the youth are encouraged to carry out further investigations, and are conducted to right ideas of the omnipotence and wisdom of God* (*Schau-Platz der Natur, oder: Unterredungen von der Beschaffenheit und der Absichten der natürlichen Dinge, wodurch die Jugend zu weitern Nachforschungen aufgemuntert, und auf richtige Begriffe von der Allmacht und Weisheit Gottes geführt wird*; see bibliography).

the skies, the particular constitution of man, and they include a separate volume on “man in company with God” (“*l’homme en société avec Dieu*”), which is intended to prove the necessity of Christian revelation. The author constructs his physico-theological theory on the operation of final causes in nature. He argues that: “*all can please and instruct us in nature, because all is full of design, proportion and precaution. ...The particular structure of the bodies around us, their tendency towards an end designate the intention of the maker.*”³⁰

Johann Albert FABRICIUS’s *Hydro-Theology, or an essay concerning the bounty, wisdom and power of God, manifested in the creation of water* (*Hydrotheologie*, Hamburg 1734; French translation, *Théologie de l’eau, ou essai sur la bonté, la sagesse et la puissance de Dieu, manifestées dans la création de l’eau*, The Hague 1741)³¹ examines, one by one, the attributes and properties of water, and points out the advantage each of them assures for the creatures. On account of the teleological character of a natural phenomenon like, e.g., evaporation, he draws the following theological conclusion about the power of God: “*The benefit we draw from this evaporation of the waters, the uninterrupted circulation it maintains with the aim of nourishing the creatures, keeping them alive and rendering them fertile, offers us a sensible proof of the wise power of the Creator.*”³² The learned FABRICIUS, who was also a famed classical philologist, the German translator of DERHAM’s *Astro-theology* (Hamburg 1728), and the author of a *Pyro-theologia* (Hamburg 1732) and an outline of *Aerotheologie* (published as a part of LESSER’s *Litho-Theologia*, Hamburg 1735), belongs among the intellectually less demanding philosophers of the physico-theological tradition.

F. Ch. LESSER’s *Insecto-Theologia* (Frankfurt and Leipzig, ¹1738, ²1740)³³ widens out the boundaries of physico-theology toward the micro-world with the help of Leeuwenhoeck’s invention, a simplified and stronger microscope. LESSER, a Leibnizian in metaphysics and author of several other physico-theological studies,³⁴ bases the argument from design on the teleological constitution of insects,

³⁰“*Tout y (=dans la nature) est capable de plaire et d’instruire, parce que tout y est plein de desseins, de proportions, et de précautions. ...Leur (=des corps qui nous environnent) structure particulière, leur tendance à une fin nous marquent l’intention de l’ouvrier.*” Preface of the author, reproduced in a nineteenth-century abridgement entitled *Beauties of The view of nature (Beautés de Spectacle de la nature*, Tours 1844; see bibliography). Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.

³¹ We consulted the French translation of 1741, which arranged the original text into longer chapters, shortened some chapter titles, transferred less important material into the footnotes, and added some footnotes.

³²“*Le bienfait, qui nous revient de cette évaporation des eaux, la circulation continue, qu’elle y entretient pour nourrir les créatures, les animer & les rendre fécondes, nous fournit une preuve bien sensible de la sage puissance du Créateur.*” (P. 42; transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

³³The French version, based on the second edition of the original and published in The Hague (1742), is more a paraphrase than a translation. Moreover, it drops the paragraph numbering of the original.

³⁴Cf. A *short sketch of a theology of the stones* (*Kurzer Entwurf einer Theologie der Steine*, Nordhausen 1732), *Litho-theology, i.e., the natural history and spiritual consideration of the stones* (*Litho-Theologia, das ist, Natürliche Historie und geistliche Betrachtung der Steine*, Hamburg 1735), and *Testaceo-theology, or a consideration of the snails and mussels* (*Testaceo-Theologia, oder Betrachtung der Schnecken und Muscheln*, 1744).

which can reveal, he says, the attributes of God just as well as the constitution of any other animal genus can:

...so there is reason to honour with sacred admiration the great Creator of these small animals... who vested with the necessary articulations, skin, muscles, parts, sinews and nerves even those insects which can hardly be seen without magnifying glasses, so that one has to acknowledge this as an admirable piece of work of His endless power and wisdom.³⁵

A tone of critical reflection on physico-theology set in with P. L. M. de MAUPERTUIS's *Essay in cosmology* (*Essay de cosmologie*, Berlin 1750). The first president of the re-founded Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences in Berlin, MAUPERTUIS was a physician (vitalist theory of conception and development of the embryo),³⁶ a mathematician, an astronomer and a philosopher. In the *Essay de cosmologie*, he established the principle of the least quantity of action (*principe de la moindre quantité d'action*) in mechanics as the universal law of motion,³⁷ and used it as an upgraded physico-theological proof of the existence of God. It is not enough to show the skill (*habileté*) of the Eternal Architect in the construction and arrangement of the 'marvels of nature', says MAUPERTUIS critically of previous physico-theology. The conviction an argument for the existence of God carries depends on whether the objective (*but, motif*) of the intentions (*desseins*) the argument attributes to God is more *reasonable* than other possible objectives (final causes) or not:

That on a thousand occasions, this universe presents us series of effects tending toward some end, is only a token of intelligence and intention; but wisdom must be sought for in the objective of these intentions. The skilfulness of execution is not enough; it is necessary that the motive be reasonable... What does it avail to wonder that every planet moves regularly, in the same direction, ...if we do not recognize it was better to move them in this rather than another way?³⁸

³⁵ "...so hat man... Ursache, den grossen Schöpfer dieser kleinen Thierlein mit heiliger Bewunderung... zu verehren, welcher auch diejenigen Insecta, so man kaum ohne Vergrößerungs-Gläser erkennen kan, mit ihren gehörigen Gelencken, Haut, Musceln, Theilen, Flächsen und Nerven begabet, so, daß man dasselbige allerdings als ein erstaunens-würdiges Werck seiner unendlichen Macht und Weisheit erkennen muß." (Introduction; p. 11 of the second edition. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

³⁶ See the *Essai sur la formation des corps organisés*, also called the *Système de la nature*, first, lost Latin version 1751.

³⁷ Cf. *Essay de cosmologie*, in TONELLI ed., tome I, p. 42.

³⁸ "Que cet Univers dans mille occasions nous présente des suites d'effets concourant à quelque but, cela ne prouve que de l'intelligence & des desseins: c'est dans le but de ces desseins qu'il faut chercher la sagesse. L'habileté dans l'exécution ne suffit pas; il faut que le motif soit raisonnable. ... Que sert-il d'admirer cette régularité des planetes à se mouvoir toutes dans le même sens, ...si nous ne voyons point qu'il fût mieux de les faire mouvoir ainsi qu'autrement?" (*Essay de cosmologie*, part one: *Où l'on examine les preuves de l'existence de Dieu, tirées des merveilles de la Nature*, *ibid.*, pp. 19–20. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) Our experience that certain series of effects in the natural world concur to realize specific objectives can only prove that some intelligent design, not that divine *wisdom* produces natural teleology. The general objective (final cause) of the operations of nature must be more reasonable than any other possible objective, if we are to draw a valid conclusion that the universal efficient cause of natural teleology is entirely rational, i.e., divinely wise.

The ‘pre-critical’ KANT carried on the constructive criticism of physico-theology in *The only possible Premise for a Demonstration of the Existence of God* (*Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Daseyns Gottes*, 2nd part/5–6; 1763). KANT asserts here that the physico-theological argument in its *traditional* form can only prove the existence of a divine *arranger* of pre-existent matter, not that of a *creator* God.³⁹ In order to extend the scope of the argument, KANT, reaching back to MAUPERTUIS’s reform of it,⁴⁰ proposes an improved version in II/6 (*Improved method of physico-theology, Verbesserte Methode der Physikotheologie*). The existence of a *creator* God may now be proved on the ground that the order of nature is regulated by general and universal rules useful and productive in their effects to man, and coordinated with each other under a principle of unity. Nature is thus, in its very conception and structure, an organic whole, which it could not have been had its individual parts been differently conceived by their omniscient cause. In this sense, the unity of the world ontologically depends on the pre-determined possibilities of existence of natural things, while the essence and existence of these depend on God as an ultimate ground:

An entirely different judgment is formed if we notice that not all natural perfection is achieved in an artificial-arbitrary manner, but highly useful rules go together with necessary unity as well, and this agreement lies in the possibilities of the things themselves. ...Since... this unity... is grounded in the possibilities of things, there must be a wise Being, without which all these natural things are not even possible, and in which as a grand ground the essences of so many natural things are united in so regular relations.⁴¹

We shall discuss the critical KANT’s alleged destruction of the physico-theological argument in the transcendental theology of the *Critique of Pure Reason* in the sections below.

Next, Sebastian Friedrich TRESCHO, poet, pastor, philosopher, and author of the *Effusions on account of Nature during some Summer Hours* (*Zerstreungen auf Kosten der Natur in einigen Sommerstunden*, Königsberg and Leipzig 1763), is an ‘archaizing reformer’ of physico-theology by virtue of his sentimental-contemplative approach to nature, and his criticism of professional, academic natural science. For this pen-partner of HERDER’s, the traditional disciplines of physico-theology

³⁹ Cf. II/6/ii; AK/II, p. 125: “An dem Bau eines Thiers sind Gliedmaßen der sinnlichen Empfindung mit denen der willkürlichen Bewegung und der Lebenstheile so künstlich verbunden, daß man boshaft sein muß (denn so unvernünftig kann ein Mensch nicht sein), ...einen weisen Urheber zu verkennen, der die Materie, daraus ein thierischer Körper zusammen gesetzt ist, in so vortreffliche Ordnung gebracht hat. Mehr folgt hieraus gar nicht. Ob diese Materie für sich ewig und unabhängig, oder auch von eben demselben Urheber hervorgebracht sei, das ist darin gar nicht entschieden.”

⁴⁰ Cf. II/1/I; *ibid.*, pp. 98–99.

⁴¹ “Ganz anders aber fällt das Urtheil aus, wenn man wahrnimmt, daß nicht alle Naturvollkommenheit künstlich, sondern Regeln von großer Nutzbarkeit auch mit nothwendiger Einheit verbunden sind, und diese Vereinbarung in den Möglichkeiten der Dinge selbst liegt. ...Weil... diese Einheit... in den Möglichkeiten der Dinge gegründet ist, so muß ein weises Wesen sein, ohne welches alle diese Naturdinge selbst nicht möglich sind, und in welchem als einem großen Grunde sich die Wesen so mancher Naturdinge zu so regelmäßigen Beziehungen vereinbaren.” (II/6/ii; *ibid.*, p. 125. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

(biology, astronomy etc.),⁴² when conducted with an exaggerated rigour, do not immediately enough show the Creator by the instrumentality of creation. They do not bring us religious conviction, though that is what they should do in the first place, as they will invariably remain unable to fulfil their alleged scientific mission, namely, to discover the real intrinsic constitution of natural substances. Albeit the natural sciences thus have to renounce an insight into the true internal structure of things, they can yield enough knowledge to teach the *heart* (by way of theological conclusions drawn from empirical evidence) about the existence of God and about the moral obligations of man:

Everywhere, he (scil. the natural philosopher) *will only want to find God, Jehovah, the Father of Nature. To discover Him for the world by showing His wisdom, His eternal order, and His manifold bounty – to feel Him – ... this will be his duty. If I take a stone in the hand, I will... ask... which is the feature of it by which my Creator manifests Himself? I will find that feature admirable...*⁴³

It has been questioned whether Georges-Louis BUFFON, author of an immense *Natural history* (*L'histoire naturelle générale et particulière*, 1749–1789, with some aid by two collaborators), really belongs to the physico-theological movement. In our interpretation, he does. In theology, BUFFON seems a Scriptural monotheist who, by an allegorical interpretation of the Biblical text, maintains that the 6 days of Genesis are historically identifiable with great epochs of nature (*les époques de la nature*).⁴⁴ For him, the ultimate accomplishment of science is the transition from the systematic observation and description of nature to a spiritual contemplation of the immaterial God beyond the bounds of the physical world, a natural science-based elevation of the soul to the vision of God (see also below): “*The Earth is a delectable residence, where all is alive and directed with a power and intelligence which fill us with awe and exalt us towards the Creator.*”⁴⁵ In the sciences, especially biology, BUFFON is unequalled in the eighteenth century.

⁴²TRESCHO reprimands the barrenness or futility of, in especial, Buffon’s high academic research (on which see below), cf. *Zerstreuungen*, p. 26.

⁴³“*Er* (der Naturlehrer) *wird überall nichts finden wollen als Gott, den Jehovah, den Vater der Natur. Ihn der Welt in seiner Weisheit, in seiner ewigen Ordnung und in seiner mannigfaltigen Güte zu entdecken – ihn selbst zu empfinden – ... das wird seine Pflicht seyn. ... Wenn ich irgend ... einen Stein in die Hand nehme, so werde ich ... fragen: welches ist hier der Zug, womit sich mein Schöpfer charakterisirt? Ich werde den Zug wunderbar finden...*” (*Zerstreuungen, Erste Sommerstunde*, pp. 24–25; transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

⁴⁴Cf. *Of the epochs of nature* (*Des époques de la nature*), in Buffon, vol. IX, pp. 37–40.

⁴⁵“*... la terre... est un séjour délicieux, où tout est animé et conduit avec une puissance et intelligence qui nous remplissent d’admiration, et nous élèvent jusqu’au Créateur.*” (*Histoire et théorie de la terre*, vol. II of *L’histoire naturelle*, p. 6. Transl. M. VASSÁNYI.) Since the ultimate aim of Buffonian natural science is theological, there may be no contradiction between theology and natural science. Cf. what BUFFON says in this respect about his interpretation of the cosmogony of Genesis: “*... je ne me suis permis cette interprétation des premiers versets de la Genèse que dans la vue d’opérer un grand bien, ce serait de concilier à jamais la science de la nature avec celle de la théologie; elles ne peuvent, selon moi, être en contradiction qu’en apparence, et mon explication semble le démontrer.*” *Des époques de la nature*, in BUFFON, vol. IX, p. 49.

The grandness of the undertaking of the 80-volume *Natural history* is not paralleled by any other scientific project of the eighteenth century,⁴⁶ except for DIDEROT’s and D’ALEMBERT’s *Encyclopedia* (on which BUFFON also collaborated with some significant articles, e.g., *Animal*). The connection between natural science and the theology of divine power is ensured by the sentiment of wonder the philosopher experiences at the sight of the organic, living, antagonistically-harmonious universe: “...it looks that the Creator’s hand has thrown... an infinity of harmonious and conflicting combinations, and a perpetuity of destructions and regenerations. What an idea of power does this sight offer us! What sentiment of respect do they inspire in us for their author!”⁴⁷

Bernardin de SAINT-PIERRE’s three-volume natural scientific treatise, the *Studies of nature* (*Études de la nature*, 1784, many further editions), is the last text we cover here. Only one book by this author is still read today, namely, his sentimental, if not kitsch, novel, *Paul et Virginie* (published in 1788 as part of the third edition of the *Études de la nature*). Among other things, SAINT-PIERRE was a friend (so long as this was possible) and a biographer of ROUSSEAU’s (cf. his *Essai sur Jean-Jacques Rousseau*). Inspired, perhaps, by ROUSSEAU’s attitude toward nature (cf. the *Creed of the Savoyan vicar, Profession de foi du vicaire savoyard* in book IV of *Émile*),⁴⁸ he introduced a relatively new point of view into physico-theological methodology. Instead of examining apart the particular purposive constitutions of the several different natural agents, he shifted the emphasis of the argument to showing how they harmoniously cooperate with each other to achieve their common good in a local (and the universal) biological *system*. While he developed this fecund physico-theological approach toward the perfect coordination of nature as a whole, this holistic scientific methodology, natural science still remained, for him,

⁴⁶The series originally comprised only 36 volumes. In later editions, however, the title was extended to cover all the works of BUFFON, so it came to include even the books of his that had first been published apart from the original series *L’histoire naturelle*. In particular, the book *Des époques de la nature* had first been published, in 1778, independently of the series, but in nineteenth-century editions, it appears as a part of *L’histoire naturelle*. A further source of bibliographical confusion is that the first three volumes, published in 1749, of the series carry exactly the same title as the whole series itself. We used the edition of 1830 (see bibliography).

⁴⁷“...il semble qu’elle (la main du Créateur) ait jeté... une infinité de combinaisons harmoniques et contraires, et une perpétuité de destructions et de renouvellements. Quelle idée de puissance ce spectacle ne nous offre-t-il pas! Quel sentiment de respect cette vue de l’univers ne nous inspire-t-elle pour son auteur!” (*L’Histoire naturelle*, vol. I, *De la manière d’étudier et de traiter l’histoire naturelle*, p. 101; M. VASSÁNYI’s translation.)

⁴⁸Claiming that NIEUWENTYT’s demonstration of the existence of God is methodologically mistaken, ROUSSEAU here rejects NIEUWENTYT’s painstaking full induction and systematic physico-theology. He proposes a more contemplative-meditative approach, which concentrates on the harmony of nature as a whole: “J’ai lu Nieuwentit avec surprise, et presque avec scandale. ... Son livre seroit aussi gros que le monde, qu’il n’auroit pas épuisé son sujet; et sitôt qu’on veut entrer dans les détails, la plus grande merveille échape, qui est l’harmonie et l’accord de tous. ... Je médite sur l’ordre de l’univers, non pour l’expliquer par de vains systèmes, mais pour l’admirer sans cesse, pour adorer le sage auteur qui s’y fait sentir.” (GAGNEBIN and RAYMOND eds., vol. IV, pp. 580 and 605.)

ultimately an affair of the religious sentiments of the *heart*, which instinctively draw man towards the Divinity.⁴⁹

To a certain extent, SAINT-PIERRE's fundamental idea concerning the holistic understanding of natural teleology as an argumentative basis of the physico-theological theory is in concord with what HERDER suggested in *Gott. Einige Gespräche* (Gotha 1787). HERDER stated that 'traditional physico-theology had come to an end', and that the time had come for this kind of theology to acknowledge and philosophically exploit the global regularity and teleology of nature as a unified system.⁵⁰ In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, then, physico-theology continued to exist (a major source of the early twentieth century is, e.g., W. PALEY's *Natural theology; or Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity, Collected from the Appearances of Nature*, London 1802),⁵¹ but it remains a historical fact that its classical epoch, the time when it was a true intellectual movement and an important, even keynote, rational theological strand, had been the eighteenth century.

⁴⁹As an apology for his 'intrusion' into the domain of the natural sciences, SAINT-PIERRE, an engineer by profession, argued that "*J'ai écrit sur les plantes et les animaux, et je ne suis point naturaliste. L'histoire naturelle n'étant renfermée dans des bibliothèques, il m'a semblé que c'était un livre où tout le monde pouvait lire. J'ai cru y voir les caractères sensibles d'une Providence; et j'en ai parlé, non comme d'un système qui amuse mon esprit, mais comme d'un sentiment dont mon coeur est plein.*" (*Études de la nature, Preface of the first edition*, ed. AIMÉ-MARTIN, vol. I, p. 2.)

⁵⁰Cf. the *Third Conversation of Gott*: "*Philolaus: Mich dünkt, es gehe jetzt auch mit den gewöhnlichen Physiko-Theologieen ziemlich zu Ende. Theophron: Sie waren zu ihrer Zeit sehr nützlich und eigentlich nichts als kindlich-schöne populäre Anwendungen einer neuen festen Naturlehre. Ihr Grund wird also immer bleiben: ja die Wahrheit in ihnen wird sich noch ungleich mehr verherlichen, wenn man nicht mehr bei jedem einzelnen kleinen Umstande nach einzelnen kleinen Absichten hascht, sondern immer mehr einen Blick über das Ganze gewinnt, das bis auf seine kleinsten Verbindungen nur Ein System ist, in welchem sich nach unveränderlichen innern Regeln die weiseste Güte offenbaret.*" (In SUPHAN ed., vol. XVI, pp. 492–493.)

⁵¹On the nineteenth- and twentieth-century history of the physico-theological theory, see HWP, pp. 951–955.

Chapter 5

General Philosophical Analysis of Physico-Theology

1 *The Quality of Physico-Theology as a Natural Science: the Example of Cosmology*

In respect of natural scientific quality (quantification, precision, methodology, etc.), the best of classical physico-theology met (or even set) the highest standards of unprejudiced, professional natural philosophy. The natural scientific fundament of their theological conclusions was a systematic, objective, and quantified analysis of empirical data. We shall try to show this, in brief, in the example of their cosmological doctrine. This short look at the cosmological picture of the world as described by the new astronomical science is also necessary for us to see the cosmological background behind the world soul theories of authors like BAADER and SCHELLING, who conceived the world soul completely to fill out the physical universe, and theorized about its role and behaviour in the interplanetary space. Their theories are demonstrated by the same, strict natural scientific methodology as that of the physico-theologists, to whom they explicitly refer on almost every page of their studies. Though it is true that physico-theology, with the rise of the Romantic sensitivity in religion, experienced a decline in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, it is true as well that German Romantic natural science is deeply rooted in the physico-theological tradition. Since the world soul is effectively a *quasi-divine* being, a representative and commissioner of God in the eyes of BAADER and SCHELLING, hence, demonstrating the existence of a universal soul is demonstrating a kind of divine presence down to the sphere of physical existence.

Acknowledged already by RAY,¹ called “*the new System*” by DERHAM,² and generally received by 1750, the cosmological model physico-theology propounded depicted an essentially Copernican universe, with the difference that the spatial

¹RAY, p. 45.

²DERHAM, *Astro-Theology*, pp. xl–xlvi.

extension of the world was thought to be at least indeterminate or perhaps infinite.³ This development on COPERNICUS was achieved through the application of better telescopes. The indefinitely large universe was thought to be filled with an infinite amount of ‘Solar Systemes’ (as DERHAM put it), probably with our immobile Sun at its centre.⁴ Physico-theologists postulated that all such solar systems consist of a sun and planets that are, by virtue of their position around their respective suns, inhabitable and possibly inhabited, but they found no scientific evidence concerning the physical constitution of the postulated extraterrestrials.⁵ Telescopic observation suggested that the basins in the Moon may be seas,⁶ and the hypothetical conclusion was proposed that there is an atmosphere and life in general in the Moon.⁷ The resulting general hypothesis of the constitution of the universe was a kind of many-world theory, based on strict scientific observation and inference.

Physico-theology could avail itself of very exact measurement data about the respective sizes of the planets in our solar system and about the length of their

³In the *Preliminary Discourse* of the *Astro-theology*, DERHAM says about the new astronomical system that it “*extends the Universe to a far more immense compass, than any of the other Systemes do, even to an indefinite space; and replenishes it with a far more grand Retinue than ever was before ascribed unto it*” (p. xl). He adds that “*as Myriads of Systemes are more for the Glory of God, and more demonstrate his Attributes than one, so it is no less probable than possible, there may be many besides this which we have the privilege of living in*” (pp. xlii–xliii; the French translation of 1729 exaggerates the original a bit: “*Il n’est donc pas moins possible que probable qu’outre le tourbillon en lequel nous vivons, il y a une infinité d’autres que nous ne connaissons point*”).

⁴In the *Astro-theology*, DERHAM says that “(in Figure № 3,) *the Solar Systeme is set in the Center of the Universe... And so it may be looked upon by us... But whether it be really so, whether it be in the Center of the Universe... is a difficulty... above our ability to fathom, although not at all improbable*” (pp. xlii–xliiii). MAUPERTUIS’s statement (*Essay de cosmologie*) is only to the effect that the Sun is immobile (but this probably implies that the Sun is at the centre of the entire Universe): “*le Soleil immobile, ou presque immobile dans le lieu des Cieux où il est placé, avoit un mouvement de révolution sur son axe*” (TONELLI ed., vol. I, p. 52). NIEUWENTYT on the contrary argues that it is just possible that not the Sun but the Earth is at the centre of the Universe for, he says, experts disagree on this point (see XXX. *Beschouwinge: Van het Onbekende*). To judge by his argumentation, he would have preferred the geocentric model.

⁵DERHAM, *Astro-Theology*, p. lvi: “*...the Maintainers of the new Systeme conclude those Planets, yea all the Planets of the Sun and of the Fixt Stars also, to be habitable Worlds; places as accommodated for Habitation, so stocked with proper Inhabitants. But now the next Question commonly put is what Creatures are they inhabited with? But this is a difficulty not to be resolved without a Revelation, or far better Instruments than the World hath hitherto been acquainted with.*” MAUPERTUIS is equally cautious: “*...ces vastes corps de planetes, ayant déjà tant de choses communes avec la Terre, peuvent encore avoir de commun avec elle d’être habités*” (*Essay de cosmologie*, TONELLI ed., vol. I, p. 55).

⁶Cf. DERHAM, *Astro-Theology*, pp. li–lii: “*...that there are Seas, or great Collections of Waters, and consequently Rivers, Clouds, Air and Vapours in the Moon, I shall make out from some of my own Views and Observations...*” (apparently, the names of the ‘lunar seas’ like, e.g., Pontus Euxinus etc. were imposed at this time).

⁷Cf. MAUPERTUIS, *Essay de cosmologie*, TONELLI ed., vol. I, pp. 55–56: “*L’astre qui éclaire nos nuits, la Lune, est une de ces planetes secondaires... Les corps des planetes secondaires, opaques comme ceux des planetes du premier ordre, peuvent faire conjecturer qu’elles sont habitées comme les autres.*”

orbits, as well as about their velocities, albeit only the first six planets, together with some of their moons, had been discovered. It was also precisely known that the shape of these planets is not a perfect globe, and that their orbits are elliptical rather than circular.⁸ As we have anticipated, it was possible to observe the geography of the Moon, to distinguish the lunar mountains together with their vast shadows; but it was also possible to perceive Saturn's rings, the *maculae* in the Sun and some distant stellar *nebulae*, as well as to measure, astonishing as it may seem, the velocity of the light travelling from the Sun to the Earth.⁹ In a final analysis, eighteenth-century physico-theology contended that the universe is, in spatial terms, half-open or virtually open, and suggested (but no longer fully warranted) that our solar system occupies the central position in the universe, in which other kinds of creatures might concur with the human race for the cares of Providence.

The cosmological and astronomical doctrine of eighteenth-century physico-theology was, hence, anything but rudimentary. Possessed of mighty instruments of research, both technical and mathematical, it had all the necessary methodological rigour. But was this natural scientific competence utilized in a logically valid manner in the inferential pattern of the physico-theological argument for the existence and attributes of God?

2 *Physico-Theology as a Philosophical Science.* *The Logical Skeleton of the Physico-Theological* *Argument for the Existence and Attributes of God*

In order to outline more technically the logical structure of the physico-theological argument as it was conceived in the eighteenth century, we shall cite here an informative passage from NIEUWENTYT's *Het regt gebruik der werelt beschouwingen*. His scheme reveals the logical pattern according to which classical early modern physico-theology mostly reached its theological conclusions based on the observation of the natural phenomena. NIEUWENTYT marks out the logical skeleton of the argument with the following series of questions:

(I will)... ask everyone... that they... shall sit down in themselves and consider seriously that, First, if they saw that 1. Not one, but very many 2. And different things, 3. Completely unconscious of everything, and what is more, of themselves as well, 4. frequently function and move in a particular manner; 5. Yet invariably, and according to the same rule, 6. Not once, but in a number of cases and times; 7. And that, without that any of them could give all these movements to itself, 8. And without that they could come together in this manner

⁸The angle of tilt, on the plane of the ecliptic, of the axis of the Earth, was also exactly measured. On the form of the planets, and on that of their orbits, see MAUPERTUIS's *Essay de cosmologie*, vol. I, p. 66. The whole third part of the *Essai de cosmologie* is a fact-filled *status quaestionis* of cosmology. Part of BUFFON's text *De la nature* is an agreeing description of our solar system (*Histoire naturelle*, vol. 1, especially pp. 173–175).

⁹Cf. MAUPERTUIS, vol. I, p. 65: "...dans sept ou huit minutes ils (scil. les rayons de lumière) arrivent à nous." This is approximately the same as what is affirmed by present-day astronomy.

by themselves, they bring about an effect which is beyond their own understanding; 9. Which, if a couple of these things or, often, only a single one of them were missing, either could not come to be in its actual perfection, or could not come to be at all; 10. Although this very effect does in itself great service and is useful, and is often even of a very important use; (I say, let everyone consider,) if they could judge otherwise than that all these things have been made to the end, and have been brought together with the intention, that they bring about the effect we see happen by their instrumentality? And second, if this first point is true: since these things are unconscious and unknowing of everything, (let everyone consider) if everyone does not have to allow that all these things have been produced and brought together by a wise and competent Maker, who had this particular end in view? And if someone could imagine that all this happened merely by chance, or by other causes and unconscious laws of nature, which operate without any understanding; and if such other causes could have directed these things towards this end in all their circumstances and movements?”¹⁰

The physico-theological argument (the argument from the direction of things, *ex gubernatione rerum*) does not rely on the ontological contingency of the natural universe (as the cosmological argument, the argument *a contingentia mundi* does). In its Nieuwentytian formulation, it first points out that the physical (proximate or remote) efficient causes producing natural change do not have the intelligence necessary for the degree of coordination without which it is impossible to reach the infinitely complex outcome, the purposeful (and universally useful) operation of the physical world. This leads to the preliminary conclusion that the virtually perfect coordination of nature is due to the operation of final causes. This first phase of the argument is formally a (natural philosophical) full induction.

In the second phase, a topological move is made from natural science to theology, through a (formally not developed) syllogism. Essentially, this contends that the concept of final cause (reached in the first phase of the argument) is logically incompatible with the operation of chance or unconscious natural laws. The notion of

¹⁰“(Ik zal)... aan een yder... versoeken; dat hy... by sigh selfs... gelieve te gaan nedersitten en met ernst na te denken; Eerst: Indien hy sagh dat 1. Niet eene, maar seer vele 2. En verscheidene, 3. Van alles, en dat meer is, van haar selfs geheel onbewuste saken, 4. Yder dikwils op een bysondere maniere, 5. Dogh egter geduurighlyk onveranderlyk, en na den selven regel, 6. Niet eenmaal, maar in een menigte van gevallen en tyden, werken en bewogen werden; 7. En sonder dat een enige van die alle dese beweginge aan sigh selfs geven kan, 8. En sonder dat sy uit sigh selven dus kunnen te samen komen, een uitwerksel buiten haar eigen kennisse voortbrengen; 9. Het welke, als alleen eenige weinige of dikwils maar een enige van deselve ontbrak, of niet in die volmaaktheit, of wel geheel niet soude kunnen voorgebragt werden; 10. Schoon het selve uitwerksel in sigh selfs, van een groten dienst en nuttigheit, en dikwils van een seer gewigtigh gebruik is: Of hy anders soude kunnen oordeelen, als dat alle dese tot dat einde gemaakt, en met dat oogmerk te samen gebragt waren, om, het geen men door haar siet geschieden, uit te werken? En ten anderen, Indien dit eerste waar is; dewyl dese saken in sigh selfs van alles onwetende en onkundig syn; of niet yder moet toestaan, dat dese alle door een wys en sigh des verstaande Maker, voort- en te samen gebragt syn, die dit einde daar door beoogt heeft? En of ymand sigh soude kunnen wys maken, dat in dit alles alleen een los gval, of andere oorsaken, en sigh onbewuste natuurwetten, die sonder verstant werken, plaatse gehadt hebben; en dese saken in al haar omstandigheden en bewegingen tot dit einde hebben kunnen bestieren?” (NIEUWENTYT 1730, p. 23, § 29: *Ways of proving that there is a God, in a general presentation – De bewijsmaniere dat'er een Godt is, in het algemeen voorgestelt*; highlighting by NIEUWENTYT. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

intentionality is only compatible with reason, or, more precisely – if the objectives set are morally perfect – wisdom. Thus, the physico-theological argument does not concern the ontology, only the teleology of nature; it considers the natural agents only *qua* coordination and substantial form or essence, but not *qua* existence.

3 *A Logically Formalized Exposition of the Physico-Theological Argument*

We may now try to reconstruct a little more formally the general or synoptic version of the argument. It has just been said that the first momentum of the argument is a natural philosophical full induction. Physico-theology examines empirically, in a theoretically endless series of case studies, whether the characteristic substantial forms, and the thereby determined natural operations of indefinitely many natural agents, tend toward an objective or are *entropic* (disorderly); and if they do, whether they tend to the individual, special, general and universal good. In this context, the individual, special, general and universal good may be conceived as the realization of the essence, and the conservation, of an individual, its species, genus and the entire natural universe. In our authors, this systematic examination concerning substantial form and natural operation seems, more specifically, to involve the six following objectively observable characteristics of the phenomenal universe: (1) convenient arrangement of the parts of a natural whole, both (a) in the macro-world and (b) in the micro-world; (2) regularity of motion of inanimate bodies, which breaks down into (a) orderly character and (b) periodicity of motion; (3) coordination of the motion of parts in a whole; (4) uniformity of the organic species; (5) regular generation of organic natures; (6) control of potentially catastrophic elements or substances like, e.g., fire. These characteristics of the natural world, examined in a (theoretically) full induction, lead us to the conclusion that in every case, the specific intrinsic constitution, and the thereon dependent operation of natural agents, is purposive, i.e., there is a universal teleology or design (*ooghmerk*, Nieuwentyt; *noble Ends*, Derham; *but*, Maupertuis) in the constitution and functioning of nature.

We have said above that in the next stage, the argumentation is reducible to syllogistical form. The following two syllogisms may be set up here:

*Major*₁: the operation of final causes (universal natural teleology) is attributable either to chance, unconscious natural laws, or intelligence

*Minor*₁: but the concept of teleology analytically implies premeditated intelligent design

*Conclusion*₁ and *major*₂: (therefore) an intelligence is responsible for the operation of final causes in the functioning of the phenomenal universe

*Minor*₂: but this intelligence, by reason of its quasi-infinite effect, cannot be finite or natural

*Conclusion*₂: therefore it must be infinite and supernatural (transcendent), i.e., a God

Hence, we are logically entitled to draw the conclusion that there is a (supernatural) intelligence which is responsible for the teleological operation of nature. As we have seen, the physico-theological argument does not first conclude that there is a God and, then, that this existing God is omniscient, omnipotent and all-good, but that there is an intelligence, which, by reason of its virtually infinite coordinating capacity, may reasonably be called a transcendent being, 'God'. It intends to prove an *existing divine intelligence* from the very beginning.

This (logically) first inference concerning virtually infinite, existing intelligence is accompanied by two complementary conclusions about virtually infinite, existing power and bounty.¹¹ Logically speaking, the first of these conclusions seems a corollary to the thesis concerning existing divine intelligence. Besides intelligence, virtually infinite power is also a *sine qua non* of the actual purposive order of the universe. The attribution of bounty to God on the basis of the physico-theological argument demands a separate judgment of value, insofar as the objective of universal natural teleology must be acknowledged as good or perfect (and implying as little evil as just possible).

We deliberately say '*virtually* infinite intelligence etc.' since the argument is a full induction in theoretical but not practical terms. It would be impossible to effectively carry out an induction which implies that every substance, system and sub-system of the entire natural world is checked for purposeful operation, and cooperation with the rest, in absolutely every conceivable aspect. If the first logical movement of the physico-theological argument is an induction, then it is one carrying no *categorically* demonstrative conviction anyway, according to Aristotelian logic. It is, therefore, philosophically justified to say '*virtually* infinite etc.' about the divine attributes as they are determined by this argument. The *actual* infinity of a cause cannot be proved with a practically not full (because interminable) induction, which, moreover, regards the world of contingency (experience). Ideally, however, the physico-theological argument does carry an indefinitely great conviction insofar as the degree of probability it reaches may *approximate* infinity. As the induction covers more and more individual cases in its theoretically endless series of particular investigations, so it can approach categorically demonstrative certainty in an infinite approximation. But in the spiritual-devotional elaborations of classical eighteenth-century physico-theological sources, the qualification '*virtually*' (a mark of the probabilistic character of the argument) was dropped, and the argument was closed with the ethical-pastoral-religious application of the theological final result.

¹¹ Cf. DERHAM, *Astro-Theology*, pp. 209–210: "As God's Works have been shown to be manifest Demonstrations of his Existence; so they are no less of his Perfections, particularly of his infinite Power, Wisdom and Goodness; inasmuch as every Workman is known by his Work. A Palace that should have nothing defective in Situation, Beauty, or Convenience, would argue the Architect to have been a man of sagacity..." (DERHAM's emphasis).

At this point, there is still a long way to go before we can deliberate the cogency of the argument. It seems that classical physico-theologists hardly ever considered the problems of evil; that there may be a hylozoistic alternative to the above interpretation of the observed natural phenomena; and that the physico-theological argument was confronted by the ‘critical’ KANT with an allegedly devastating criticism. A considered position taken on the physico-theological argument must first face these difficulties.

4 *The Problem of Evil and the Physico-Theological Argument*

“*Si Deus est, unde malum?*” ‘If there is a God, where is evil from?’¹² In the case of physico-theology, an argument from the perfect coordination of *nature*, this question will concern, first and foremost, natural (and not moral) evil. The problem of natural evil affects the second phase of the argument from design, in which not only the intelligence and power but also the bounty of God is proved. The fact that there are ravaging earthquakes, typhoons and volcanic eruptions does not, in itself, sap the conclusion concerning the intelligence and power of the Maker, but it may, evidently, query the (perfect) bounty of God. As is known, the great Lisbon earthquake of 1755 made VOLTAIRE think that the amount of physical suffering in nature is compatible with the existence, but not the goodness, of the Creator, and that without religious belief in a better future state it is impossible to reconcile natural evil with divine bounty (see the *Poème sur le désastre de Lisbonne*, 1755). But natural evil does not only consist in catastrophic ‘acts of God’. It includes the spontaneous corruption of the intrinsic natures (or functioning) of the different forms of life in individuals (disease) or entire species (epidemic) as well. It may be proposed that an even greater source of natural evil is the ruthless and endless struggle going on in the vegetative and sensitive kingdoms and deriving from the difference between the respectively individual, special, general and universal final causes. All this implies the physical evil of suffering. Hence, it may seem that the coordination of the several different ends of an indefinitely great amount of natural agents is anything but successful or even possible, let alone perfect, in the actual condition nature is. Is the argument from design able, philosophically, to resolve this knotty problem?

5 *The Possible Resolution of the Problem of Evil Within the Bounds of the Physico-Theological Theory*

In historical terms, we may say that most classical physico-theologists do not appear to have identified natural evil as a problem in the way of the argument, though at least FÉNELON offered ingenious counter-arguments against it, based on

¹²This classical question is put, e.g., by LEIBNIZ in the *Essays on Theodicy*, part one, § 20.

the logical–conceptual connection between finitude and imperfection. FÉNELON, in the *Traité de l'existence de Dieu*, produces no less than five counter-arguments to resolve the problem of (moral and) natural evil: (1) generally, man is responsible for moral evil; (2) otherwise, evil is God's instrument of punishment or (3) temptation and perfection; (4) or human beings simply do not see the wider context of what they believe to be evil but what is good within the whole; (5) and last, whatever is defective in the work of God is a sign that nature has come to be by creation out of nothing, so it still bears the mark of its essential nothingness.¹³ Of these, (2), (4) and (5) concern natural evil. (4) Is a case that, according to FÉNELON, does not imply the presence of any real evil in the world, while (2) is actually a mark of divine providence, for though it does imply suffering, it only seems, but *is not essentially, evil*. Finally, (5) is a complex case, as FÉNELON says that God wanted creation to keep reminders of its origin from nothingness, while at the same time he adds that evil (an effect of imperfection), to some extent, necessarily follows also from the finitude of creatures: “*All that which is not God can have but a limited perfection; and that which has but a limited perfection remains forever imperfect... The creature would be the Creator Himself, if it did not lack anything; because it would be vested with the fullness of perfection, which is the divinity itself.*”¹⁴ This account may be called a metaphysical rationale for the problem of evil.¹⁵

Though this is a good philosophical answer in its early eighteenth-century intellectual context (LEIBNIZ puts forward a very similar argument in the *Theodicy*, 1710, part I, §§ 20 and 30–31), still, it presupposes that the opponent accepts at least the necessity of Creation. Now in a more systematic approach, one may maintain that despite this, the argument from design still conserves the overwhelming part of its convincing power, even when the problem of evil has detracted from its likelihood. The first thing we have to call to mind is that the physico-theological argument for the existence and attributes of God has been a calculus of probabilities from the very beginning, so it is not destroyed at once by some evidence to the contrary. To our mind, then, the effective philosophical intention of the argument is not to prove the existence of God *on the ground that* absolutely every individual

¹³ See *Traité de l'existence de Dieu*, I/88: “*Il n'est point question de critiquer ce grand ouvrage (scil. l'univers). Les défauts qu'on y trouve viennent (1) de la volonté libre et déréglée de l'homme, qui les produit par son dérèglement; ou de celle de Dieu, toujours sainte et toujours juste, qui veut (2) tantôt punir les hommes infidèles et (3) tantôt exercer par les méchants les bons qu'il veut perfectionner. Souvent même (4) ce qui paroît un défaut à notre esprit borné, dans un endroit séparé de l'ouvrage, est un ornement par rapport au dessein général, que nous ne sommes pas capables de regarder avec des vues assez étendues et assez simples pour connoître la perfection du tout. ... Mais, après tout, les vrais défauts mêmes de cet ouvrage ne sont que des imperfections que (5) Dieu y a laissées pour nous avertir qu'il l'avoit tiré du néant.*” (Ed. DUMAS, pp. 86–87.)

¹⁴ “*Tout ce qui n'est point Dieu ne peut avoir qu'une perfection bornée; et ce qui n'a qu'une perfection bornée demeure toujours imparfait... La créature seroit le créateur même, s'il ne lui manquoit rien; car elle auroit la plénitude de la perfection, qui est la divinité même.*” (*Ibid.*, p. 87; transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

¹⁵ A more down-to-earth rationale for evil is proffered in LESSER's *Theology of the Insects*, vol. II, book II, part II, chapter IV.

substance of the world may actualize all the potentialities inherent in their respective constitutions, *but* on the ground that each single one of an indeterminably great amount of substances receives the maximum possibility of existence that is just allowed by the equally maximal realization of the existential possibilities (inherent potentialities) of all other individual substances of the world, in a manner that the whole – as a system coordinated on all levels as perfectly as possible – constantly and teleologically operates, in the condition of a dynamic balance, for the preservation of itself.

Thus, the philosophical accent of the physico-theological argument, systematically speaking, is on the point that each individual being or substance receives the maximum existential possibility which is possible at all within the frame of the whole (the phenomenal universe) – since outside that frame, the existential possibilities of the individual are, by all means, null and void. If the aggregate of all finite substances is to be a world, then each individual substance contributes to the universal overall good by its own particular struggle around truth with the rest of the substances in the natural (as well as in the moral) world.

This interpretation may remedy the alleged insufficiency of the universal coordination of the several different ends of the indefinitely great amount of natural agents, but does it resolve the problem presented by the ‘acts of God’ and the (individual and special) corruption of the internal natures? A separate answer seems necessary here. In our opinion, it is impossible to disprove the physico-theological argument with reference to the problem of natural evil (‘acts of God’ and morbidity) insofar as there could be absolutely no question about evil and disorder taking place in the (natural and moral) world if there were no *order* in the first place. Only the existence of a universal order and teleology makes it possible that natural disorder *can* occur at all. Order is the ground and condition of existence, while evil is the locally and temporally limited lack of order. The pervasively ordered character of existence is thus our referential frame whenever we speak about disorder, so much so, that if the measure or proportion of disorder were to reach a critical threshold value, all existence would become utterly impossible at once. *We would all die a sudden death if the principle of existence were not order.* Hence, the world is fundamentally order (*κόσμος*, *mundus*), and the argument from this order to the bounty of the ordering principle is philosophically justified. The dialectic momentum of the problem posed by the ‘acts of God’ and morbidity, even together with the argument from the relative insufficiency of universal coordination, do not destroy the thesis concerning the divine attribute of goodness.

6 *The Atheistic Hylozoistic Alternative to Physico-Theology*

Hylozoism is the natural philosophical position that all matter is alive and active by itself (so there is no part of the material universe that could be considered lifeless and merely passive). A degree of hylozoism may be philosophically

compatible with theism (cf. MAUPERTUIS, BUFFON) or deism (cf. ROBINET), but it is its atheistic strand which offers a full alternative to physico-theology (cf. the mature DIDEROT) and which we, consequently, have to adumbrate here. In historical terms, DIDEROT's full-fledged, materialistic hylozoism apparently relies on LOCKE's hypothesis concerning thinking matter (Book IV, Ch. iii, § 6 of *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 1690), on TOLAND's theory of essentially active matter (Epistle V: *Motion Essential to Matter* in the *Letters to Serena*, 1704), on MAUPERTUIS's theory of the spontaneous creative degeneration of the embryo (*Essai sur la formation des corps organisés*, 1751),¹⁶ and, probably, also on ROBINET's biological transformationalism (the theory, expounded in his anonymous *De la nature*, 1761 that there has been only a single, created prototype for all species of plants and animals). The complex, atheistic vitalistic (hylozoistic) theory DIDEROT innovatively conceived, departing in part from these authors, contends that all natural phenomena identified by physico-theology as the result of preliminary divine design exclusively derive from the spontaneously operating, inherent powers of universal matter. All motion of matter (whether regular or not) is thus self-generated, and the emergence of life is due to the self-organization of matter. Hence, in a biological respect, DIDEROT's hylozoism may be defined as the theory of evolution without the Darwinian component of natural selection. As expounded in *Le rêve de d'Alembert* (1769), in the *Principes philosophiques sur la matière et le mouvement* (1770), and in the unfinished but systematic manuscript, *Physiologie* (on which he worked until his death in 1784), his materialistic rationale for the motion of matter and the phenomena of life is a complete philosophical alternative to – or, better, a total negation of – physico-theology. When confronted with the syllogistical scheme of the theistic argument from design (cf. Section 3), DIDEROT would reject minor₁ (that 'the concept of teleology analytically implies premeditated intelligent design'). He does not seem to directly deny that the phenomenal world is teleologically ordered (non-entropic) or coordinated, but he certainly does not accept divinely instituted final causes. By attributing the order of nature to the spontaneity of matter, he jettisons both conclusions of the syllogistical scheme, so, on his hypothesis, it will not be necessary to posit a transcendent intelligence to explain natural teleology. But is it reasonable to drop minor₁ of the physico-theological syllogism, i.e., to derive order from spontaneity? How does the argument from design relate to this idea?

¹⁶MAUPERTUIS published a *Dissertatio inauguralis metaphysica de universali naturae systemate* (a misleading title) under the pseudonym Dr. Baumann in Erlangen in 1751, which was thus usually referred to as the '*dissertation d'Erlangen*'. Very soon, it became known that the author was MAUPERTUIS, who then issued a second, bilingual (Latin and French, *sine anno* and *sine loco*), and a third, monolingual (French, 1754) edition, allegedly in Berlin but really in Paris. The third edition carried the non-misleading title *Essai sur la formation des corps organisés*. But because the original Latin title was also translated into French as *Système de la nature* and later used as a designation of the work, the very same text has since been referred to under no less than four different titles.

7 *The Physico-Theological Position in Respect of the Atheistic Hylozoistic Theory*

In chronological terms, atheistic–materialistic vitalism is an intellectual phenomenon of the last phase of the Enlightenment, while physico-theology was a characteristic mode of thought in the first half or first two thirds of the eighteenth century (DIDEROT himself had accepted physico-theology in his early *Philosophical thoughts*, 1745).¹⁷ Hence, it is difficult to say exactly how the great physico-theological classics of the earlier eighteenth century would have reacted to DIDEROT’s radical theory concerning the spontaneous motion, sensibility, and life of matter. But it is possible to show how they related, in general, to the anti-Newtonian thesis that “Action is essential to Matter”, since this had been proposed at least by TOLAND at the beginning of the eighteenth century.¹⁸ At least two classical physico-theologists, NIEUWENTYT and MAUPERTUIS, set down the metaphysical principle explicitly that corporeal substance is in itself inactive (inert) so bodies cannot intrinsically move themselves, which would impair only one component of DIDEROT’s complex radical theory. NIEUWENTYT argues that the non-believer should consider the following theses about the nature of bodies in general:

I. That a body can be moved as well as stay in rest, i.e., be not moved; and in both these cases remain a perfect body, and conserve its essence.

II. Whereof it follows that motion does not belong to the essence of body.

III. And one may remark about this that the famous Mr **Newton**, and the commentator of his demonstrations and argumentations, Mr **Whiston**... have described or defined **body** rightly; (namely,) that it is an extended and solid substance, not only indifferent to motion and rest but also devoid of any power in itself and only passive (**substantia iners & passiva**)...¹⁹

In the *Essay de cosmologie*, MAUPERTUIS suggests that: “We see some parts of matter in motion, we see other parts of it in rest: motion is hence not an essential property of matter; it is a condition in which it may happen to be or not to be, and which we do not see that it could give to itself by itself...”²⁰

¹⁷ *Pensées philosophiques*, thoughts 18–20.

¹⁸ Cf. J. TOLAND: *Letters to Serena*, Epistle V (GAWLICK ed., p. 202).

¹⁹ “I. Dat een lichaam kan bewogen werden, en ook in rust syn of niet bewogen werden; en in beide dese gevallen een volkomen lichaam blyven en syn wesen behouden.

II. Waar uit volgt, dat de beweeginge tot het wesen van een lichaam niet behoort.

III. En over sulks kan men hier aanmerken, dat den vermaarden Heer **Newton**, en den verklaarder van desselfs bewysen en redeneeringen, den Heer **Whiston**... een **lichaam** te regt beschreven of gedefinieert hebben; dat het is een uitgestrekte en vaste substantie, niet alleen onverschillende tot beweging en ruste, maar ook sonder eenige kragt in sich selfs, en enkel lydelyk synde (**substantia iners & passiva**)...” NIEUWENTYT 1730, XXVII. *Beschouwinge. Van eenige Natuur-wetten*, § 23: *Eerste beweginge bewyst een Godt*, p. 771 (emphasis by NIEUWENTYT; transl. by M. VASSÁNYI).

²⁰ “Nous voyons des parties de la matière en mouvement, nous en voyons d’autres en repos: le mouvement n’est donc pas une propriété essentielle de la matière; c’est un état dans lequel elle peut se trouver, ou ne pas se trouver, & que nous ne voyons pas qu’elle puisse se procurer d’elle-même etc.” (TONELLI ed., vol. I, p. 32; transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

It is questionable if all this offers a conclusive counter-argument. TOLAND's thesis is precisely not that in the sublunar world there is a spontaneous locomotion of extended bulks of matter, but that unconscious natural agents constantly experience physical, chemical and biological change. They are never completely inactive but keep reacting with each other, apparently by their inherent active powers.²¹ Since this dynamic interaction or mutual commerce of substances is the natural condition of the material universe (as an atheistic hylozoist could argue), it is likely that universal nature engenders all mechanical and biological phenomena by its own power. Nature is, hence, its own explanation; its endless complexity and eternal perfect order do not require an external determining ground. This (very modern) formulation of the atheistic hylozoistic theory is the true philosophical challenge to physico-theology.

It seems that at this point, we may have recourse to WOLFF's physico-theological conception, which is, as we have indicated in Section 2 of Chapter 4, grafted on the Leibnizian cosmological argument from the ontological and qualitative contingency of the world. In WOLFF's view, something can be its own explanation (can be its own existential ground, i.e., may include existence in its essence) only if it is a necessary thing (*ens necessarium*); otherwise, it will be necessary to posit a cause (*causa sufficiens* or *determinans*), which exhaustively determines a contingent thing to be this and not that. Since the world is never *necessarily* so as it actually is, it is philosophically justified to conclude that it has an *external* determining ground:

We would namely say that the world is necessary if space and time did not let themselves be filled up also in a different way than the world is filled. ...in that case, we would not need any further ground why there is this world and not any other... But... if other arrangements of the world are also possible...; then we find no sufficient ground why it is in this way rather than another way, and consequently, we have to look for the determining ground outside it... In this manner, the contingency of the world renders it suitable for revealing to us that there is a God, i.e., that it has an originator and is not by itself.²²

This argument (which depends not on the ontological but the qualitative or constitutional contingency of the natural world) may be completed with two further

²¹ As a matter of historical fact, TOLAND himself, toward the end of Epistle V, proposed in a somewhat desultory manner that matter had first been invested with motion by God, who keeps directing all natural motion: "*Besides, that God was able to create this Matter active as well as extended, that he cou'd give it the one Property as well as the other, and that no reason can be assign'd why he shou'd not endue it with the former as well as with the latter; is there likewise no necessity that he shou'd ever or rather always direct its Motions?*" (Ed. GAWLICK, p. 234.) Thus in a final instance, TOLAND reserves the direction of the perfectly co-ordinated motions of matter – so among other things, of "*the Formation of Animals or Plants*" – for God. That nature might produce all these phenomena all alone is DIDEROT's development of the idea. None of the earlier (deistic or theistic) hylozoists (ROBINET, BUFFON, MAUPERTUIS) went so far as that.

²² "*Wir würden nemlich sagen daß sie (scil. die Welt) nothwendig wäre, wenn Raum und Zeit nicht noch auf eine andere Art sich erfüllen liesse, als sie erfüllet ist. ...so brauchten wir keinen weiteren Grund, warumb diese Welt da wäre und keine andere... Hingegen... wenn noch andere Arten der Welt möglich sind...; so findet man in der Welt keinen zureichenden Grund, warumb sie so und nicht anders ist, und demnach muß man ihn ausser ihr suchen... Solchergestalt macht die Zufälligkeit der Welt... dieselbe geschickt, daß man aus ihr erkennen kan, es sey ein Gott, das ist, sie habe einen Urheber und sey nicht von sich selbst.*" (*Vernünfftige Gedancken von den Absichten der natürlichen Dinge*, pp. 9–10, highlighting added; transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) The Leibnizian LESSER, in the *Insecto-Theologia*, vol. I, book I., chapter I, repeats essentially the same argument.

systematic considerations concerning, more specifically, the biological facet of the atheistic hylozoistic theory: (1) the transition from the *spontaneity* involved in the generation of life to the *necessity* manifest in the conservation of the internal nature of the species; and (2) the time paradox implied in the process of the spontaneous development of an animal towards higher degrees of structural complexity and perfection. Regarding (1), it is logically inexplicable how a process that began all *spontaneously* could ever transform into a *necessary* process guaranteeing the uniformity of reproduction, considered (by, e.g., BUFFON in the significant article "Animal" of the *Encyclopaedia*) as the *differentia* of the biological concept of "species." In other words, the emergence of thoroughly (by birth) determined internal natures, from an original process which, being fully spontaneous, has no determinative power, remains a mystery.

On the other hand (2), there seems to be a time paradox involved in the idea that a spontaneous process of development may advance towards ever higher degrees of organization and, therefore, perfection, because it is impossible to progress towards higher complexity or perfection unless an organism knows, in advance, which condition (structure, constitution) is more perfect than another one, among the indefinitely many possible conditions (structures, constitutions). Such knowledge would imply that the primitive machine the primary molecule is must know the perfection of a stage of development it has not yet reached. In other words, it would have knowledge about a future state in the present, which is a time paradox.

In a final analysis, it seems that the atheistic hylozoistic alternative to physico-theology is ultimately reticent on the principle of life; that it refuses to pose the question *why* the primary molecule was formed at all. The physico-theological answer to that query is a philosophically more articulate reaction than reticence. The postulation of final causes, and, thereby, an ordering intellect, is a more satisfying explanation to a rational being, man, who, conditioned by its intellectual constitution, looks for reasons everywhere. But the physico-theological argument, in order to gain a degree of cogency, still has to overcome KANT'S classical criticism.

8 *KANT'S Criticism of the Physico-Theological Argument for the Existence and Attributes of God in the Critique of Pure Reason*

KANT, who in *The only possible Premise*, still accepted that the argument from design carries some though not categorically demonstrative conviction, entirely abandoned the argument in the transcendental theological part of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. His philosophical criticism directs our attention to the second syllogism of the physico-theological inference, which attributes infinity and supernaturality to the intelligence designated as the cause of natural teleology in the first syllogism. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, KANT essentially accepts the first syllogism, but adds that the argument then performs a philosophically unjustifiable transition as it proceeds from the not fully determined concept of a master-builder or demiurge (*Weltbaumeister*; a concept of relation, i.e., a *Verhältnissvorstellung*) to the fully determined idea of a creator God

conceived as the most perfect being (*das allerrealste Wesen*, B 624, AK III/399, *die höchste Realität*, B 628, AK III/402).²³ As KANT points out, the physico-theological argument does not tackle the ontological problem of the *origin* (or creation) of matter. It takes for granted that the notion of the arranger of matter is that of a Creator, who is perfect in every respect. For the mature KANT, however, this is a philosophically illicit identification within the bounds of the physico-theological argument, and a crossing over into the domain of the cosmological argument, which he, in turn, rejects.

The last logical move of the *cosmological* argument, he continues, is an identification of the absolutely necessary being (*ens necessarium*, i.e., *ein Schlechthinnothwendiges*, B 657, AK III/418) with the absolutely perfect being, the *ens realissimum*. Thus, the cosmological argument essentially presupposes (can be reduced to, or, even more precisely, is a reversal of) the ontological argument (*CpR*, B 636–637, AK III/406–407).²⁴ Hence, in the Kantian analysis, the physico-theological argument for the existence and attributes of God performs, in large part, an *a priori*, purely notional transition from the concept of an arranger of pre-existent matter ultimately to the existence of the absolutely necessary being through the mediating concept of the most perfect being. At the same time, we repeat, the existence of at least a demiurge seems acceptable to KANT, judging by *CpR*, B 655, AK/III 417, where he says that:

The utmost, therefore, that the argument can prove is an architect of the world who is always very much hampered by the adaptability of the material in which he works, not a creator of the world to whose idea everything is subject. This, however, is altogether inadequate to the lofty purpose which we have before our eyes, namely, the proof of an all-sufficient primordial being.²⁵

9 A Criticism of KANT's Criticism of Physico-Theology

To our mind, the sight of the conspicuous harmonies of nature pretty much disproves KANT's conclusion – the arranger of the natural universe has been perspicuously all but constricted by the limited 'suitability of the material'. On this point, physico-theology seems more realistic (or less prejudiced) as it philosophically recognizes that the degree of perfection the arrangement and coordination of nature

²³ Cf. also his *Lectures on Metaphysics, Vorlesungen über die Metaphysik*, (PÖLITZ) ed., pp. 49–50: *Of the Real and the Negative (Vom Realen und Negativen)*.

²⁴ Cf. also *The only possible Premise...*, III/3; AK/II, pp. 157–159.

²⁵ "Der Beweis könnte also höchstens einen Weltbaumeister, der durch die Tauglichkeit des Stoffs, den er bearbeitet, immer sehr eingeschränkt wäre, aber nicht einen Weltschöpfer, dessen Idee alles unterworfen ist, darthun, welches zu der großen Absicht, die man vor Augen hat, nämlich ein allgenugsames Urwesen zu beweisen, bei weitem nicht hinreichend ist." (Highlighting by KANT; transl. by N. KEMP SMITH, see bibliography.)

reaches gives logical ground more to the conclusion that the arranger had an indefinitely great (quasi-infinite) power over matter, than to the conclusion that His power was limited by anything. In the Kantian criticism of the physico-theological argument, there is a certain reluctance to dialectically exploit as much as the argument *does* prove. Even KANT, himself, is apparently ready to accept the argumentation as far as it posits the existence of an arranger of (pre-existent) matter. But this point is very far from being argumentatively unusable material. It seems reasonable to think, at the sight of the 'marvels of nature', that the arranger of universal matter must have been at least pre-constituted so as to be able easily to compel matter into order, and that matter must have been at least pre-constituted so as to yield perfectly to that compulsion. In other words, arranger and arranged must themselves have been perfectly coordinated from the very beginning. By virtue of OCKHAM's razor, it seems more reasonable to account for that harmony by the supposition that the arranger has produced or created matter, than by any other supposition (including even the pre-existence of matter). To put it differently, if matter itself (cf. hylozoism) or chance cannot be made responsible for the perfect teleology of nature, then by virtue of the argument from design, we must conclude that an arranger has arranged matter; and, an *a priori* precondition of this conclusion is the assumption that the perfect coordination of arranger and arranged has had a condition or *principle*. At this point, the logically simplest, i.e., most reasonable, solution of the query is – unless we want to go to infinity – to say that, probably, the Arranger Himself has created matter, and that this explains best the perfect coordination of arranger and arranged.

On the other hand, it is flying in the face of reason and experience to maintain that the pervasive order and teleological functioning of the natural universe does *not* teach us anything we may articulate philosophically about the existence of a (transcendent) efficient cause of order. It is, in fact, completely *unreasonable* to give up the physico-theological argument because 'it can only prove the existence of an arranger'. If it can be proved that matter is not self-moving and self-organizing (which implies disproving the entire hypothesis of evolution), that the arranger has had a perfect control of matter, and that He has been guided by the greatest bounty and wisdom possible in the arrangement of matter, then this is enough for the arranger to deserve our religious awe. It is, on this basis, philosophically legitimate to set down the concept of a transcendent ordering cause, i.e., a God.

10 *Jacob's Ladder as the First Metaphysical Metaphor of Eighteenth-Century Physico-Theology*

All things considered, it seems reasonable to maintain that the argument from design conserves at least the degree of cogency attributed to it by the early KANT in *The only possible Premise*. This implies that it is reasonable to accept the ('pre-critical' and 'critical') Kantian thesis that this argument proves, first and foremost, the existence and chief attributes of an *arranger* of universal matter. But if

we creatively reflect on the above-mentioned principle of the apparently perfect coordination of arranger and arranged, the argument from design will further be able to render likely the thesis that the Arranger *is* the perfect being we call God.

Eighteenth-century classical physico-theology, for its part, never hesitated to draw this conclusion. All authors acknowledged the authority of Scripture, and several of them used other arguments as well to prove the existence and attributes of God, like, e.g., WOLFF (in his *Theologia naturalis*, 1736) or the early KANT (who, in *The only possible Premise*, also advocated an upgraded version of the ontological argument as the only *categorical* demonstration of the existence of God). None of these authors seriously disbelieved the harmony of reason and revelation. These historical circumstances, together with the fact that many of them were not professional philosophers, explain that they, in a sense, jumped to the creationist conclusion in the physico-theological inference.

We said at the beginning of this particular presentation that eighteenth-century physico-theology had a tendency to combine terse natural scientific enquiry with spiritual-devotional elaborations (as TRESCHO says, ‘effusions’). As we are approaching the end of the present chapter, we shall give an idea of how physico-theology ascended from wondering at the marvels of nature, through the natural philosophical induction and the metaphysical syllogisms, to admiring, more immediately, the supernatural glory of God, of which nature bears but a faint reflection. The image of the ladder of Jacob, suggested by some physico-theological sources, may reasonably be seen as the ultimate metaphysical metaphor of this intellectual movement.

In classical physico-theological spirituality, the contemplation of the open book of the heavens entails a Platonic rapture of the soul, which begins with an admiration of Creation. This admiring contemplation of the ‘marvels of nature’, *les merveilles de la nature*, leads to an elevation of the soul, which transports it to a vision of celestial glory offering, as it were, an immediate intellectual view of divine magnificence. Nature is conceived here as the ladder of Jacob, on which the soul gradually ascends towards the divinity, every grade of the ladder being a class of things, which (scientifically examined in the physico-theological full induction) guides the pious scholar, disciple of God, step by step towards the moment in which the ladder itself may be discarded. Thus, for BUFFON, “*Nature is the throne of divine magnificence: the person who contemplates her, who studies her, gradually ascends to the interior throne of omnipotence...*”²⁶ Or, as SAINT-PIERRE put it, “*by the sight of the actual harmonies of nature, I ascend towards her maker, and I hope*

²⁶“*La nature est le trône de la magnificence divine: l’homme qui la contemple, qui l’étudie, s’élève par degrés au trône intérieur de la toute-puissance...*” (BUFFON: *De la nature*, vol. I of *L’histoire naturelle*, p. 179; transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) – That the result of this elevation was rhetorically thought to offer a quasi-intellectual vision of the Godhead is shown by the short prayer BUFFON inserted in the text of his *De la nature* (vol. I of *L’histoire naturelle*, p. 185): “*Grand Dieu, dont la seule présence soutient la nature et maintient l’harmonie des lois de l’univers; vous qui du trône immobile de l’empyrée voyez rouler sous vos pieds toutes les sphères célestes sans choc et sans confusion; qui du sein du repos reproduisez à chaque instant leurs mouvemens immenses, et seul régissez dans une paix profonde ce nombre infini de cieus et de mondes; rendez, rendez enfin le calme à la terre agitée!*”

for more blissful destinies in another world.”²⁷ But WOLFF is the most explicit of all on this point: “*This same description of the world... is the ladder on which we may ascend to God and see him as he is, namely, a being of unrestricted freedom, endless knowledge, the highest wisdom, the greatest power, unspeakable bounty and the strictest equity.*”²⁸

This ascension of the soul was further represented by NIEUWENTYT as an illumination of the finite understanding through an irradiation of divine light, which removes the obscurity deriving from the finitude of the human intellect, and reveals the existence and attributes of God. In this rhetorical image, the word *verligten* (‘to enlighten’) was used with the pregnant meaning that ‘the divinity emits supernatural intellectual light and gives insight into divine existence’. Classical physico-theology, then, apparently had the capacity to combine the spiritual enlightenment (*verlichting*) of the soul with the scientific Enlightenment (*Verlichting*) of the mind, as it is expressed by the following passage from NIEUWENTYT:

*And may it please the same (the admirable Benefactor of all) to enlighten the eyes and the mind of this unlucky person (the atheist), so that he may not only be convinced, with full conviction, of the great Creator’s wonderful and inscrutable wisdom, of His immense and unlimited, discretionary power, and of His generously given and undeserved lovingkindness, by virtue of the magnificent framing of this so beautiful world and all the marvellous things that are in it: but may he also experience, together with believing Christendom, the wonders of divine grace, by virtue of the steady and immobile grounds of God’s Holy Word, so that he may thereby be joyful in the so certainly approaching eternity.*²⁹

This hopeful sight of the ‘so certainly approaching eternity’ opens up the true ultimate metaphysical perspective of physico-theology.

²⁷“...par le spectacle des harmonies (a technical term in SAINT-PIERRE) actuelles de la nature, je m’élève vers son auteur; et j’espère dans un autre monde de plus heureux destins.” (Paul et Virginie, ed. AIMÉ-MARTIN, vol. IV, p. 93; transl. M. VASSÁNYI.)

²⁸“Es ist dieselbe Welt-Beschreibung... die Leiter; darauf wir zu Gott hinauf steigen können und ihn sehen, wie er ist, nemlich ein Wesen von unumschränkter Freyheit, von unendlicher Erkenntnis, von der höchsten Weisheit, von der grösten Macht, von unaussprechlicher Güte und von der strengsten Gerechtigkeit.” (WOLFF, *Vernünfftige Gedancken von den Absichten der natürlichen Dinge*, Foreword, p. 3 verso; transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

²⁹“En het den selven (den Aanbiddelyken Weldoender van alle) mogte gelieven de oogen en het verstant van dese ongelukkige te verligten, op dat hy niet alleen van des grooten Scheppers verwonderlyke en onafspeurelyke Wysheit, van Syne soo gedugte en vrymagtige, na syn welbehagen werkende Mogenheit, en van Syne vrywillige en onverdiende Goedertierentheit uit het heerlyke samenstel van dese soo schoone Wereld, en al het verwonderlyke dat daar in is, met volle overreedinge mogte overtuigt werden: maar ook de wonderen van de Goddelyke genade uit de vaste en onbeweegelyke gronden van Desselfs H. Woord (...) met het gelovigh Christendom magh ondervinden, om daar door in de soo seker nakende Eeuwigheit gelukkig te wesen.” (NIEUWENTYT 1730, XXX. *Beschouwinge. Van het Onbekende. § 17. Overtuiging van het onbekende, en besluit*, pp. 915–916, underlining added; transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

11 *The Second Metaphysical Metaphor of Eighteenth-Century Physico-Theology That Creation Is the Language of the Creator*

The metaphysical metaphor that Creation is the language that the Creator speaks for man to understand Him, or that Creation is a book in which man can read about the Creator, may be regarded as an ultimate physico-theological statement, inasmuch as it summarizes the final theological conclusions of this scientific movement. We find different formulations of it in almost all physico-theologists; but in every case, the poetical manner of expression of the metaphor cuts short the lengthy reasoning from observation to metaphysical conclusions, allowing the reader to intuitively grasp the essence of the argument. It does not *identify* the visible with the invisible, but it *symbolizes* the latter with the former; it suggests that the contemplation of the heavens is *as if* contemplating the Maker of the heavens; it affirms that the universe is a language, a sign, a book, or a hieroglyphic metaphor itself, which is *understandable* to man. As the *Introduction* to DERHAM's *Astro-theology* says: this "*Language of the Heavens is so plain, and their Characters so legible; that all, even the most barbarous Nations, that have no Skill in either in Languages or Letters, are able to understand and read what they proclaim.*"³⁰ Or, in BUFFON's words: man "*reads in the book of the world as in a copy of the Divinity.*"³¹ Nature is, then, a likeness or representation of God, whereby we learn, in a final analysis, about the *presence* of God: nature "*veils the Divinity before us in order that we can support His approach*" (SAINT-PIERRE).³²

12 *The Indefinite Presence of God in Physico-Theology. Physico-Theology as a Source of Inspiration for the Early German Romantics*

This is a good point for us to start our closing consideration on how classical physico-theology may have influenced the manner in which the early German Romantics conceived of the relationship between God and nature. Authors like

³⁰DERHAM 1715, p. 2: *A Survey of the Heavens*.

³¹"(l'homme) lit dans le livre du monde comme dans un exemplaire de la Divinité." (BUFFON: *De la nature*, tome I of *L'histoire naturelle*, p. 179. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

³²"(la nature) nous voile la Divinité, afin que nous en puissions supporter les approches." (*Études de la nature, Étude XII: De quelques lois morales de la nature*, which concludes from certain human sentiments to the existence of God, section *Du merveilleux*; ed. AIMÉ-MARTIN, tome 3, p. 195. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) Similar statements can be found in NIEUWENTYT: "(atheists will be converted,) en voyant briller par tout la Divinité" (*L'existence de Dieu, démontrée par les merveilles de la nature...*, II. *Contemplation: Des choses visibles & de nous-mêmes en général*, p. 46); and in (PLUCHE): "*Dieu a toujours montré sa présence, sa sagesse & ses intentions par le spectacle de l'univers, par les sentimens de la conscience, & par les instructions traditionnellement transmises des premiers hommes aux races suivantes...*" (*Le spectacle de la nature*, 3rd ed., of 1752, tome VIIIème, p. 14).

NOVALIS (cf. especially *Die Lehrlinge zu Sais*) and SCHELLING sought for God through the medium of nature, and the late, somewhat sentimentalistic conception of SAINT-PIERRE certainly anticipates their attitude. But physico-theology as a movement failed to fully specify, in philosophical terms, what kind of presence, in the finite universe, is attributable to God by virtue of the argument because it was essentially aimed at proving not the presence but the existence of God. Hence, we may say that physico-theology is, in the first instance, a philosophy of the *definite existence but indefinite presence* of God. The notion of divine presence, however, does not remain fully undetermined in it; for one may say that the teleological momentum in the mechanistic and dynamical operation of the natural forces *represents* a physico-theological virtuality, a transcendent cause, so there is reason to speak of a *virtual* presence of God according to physico-theology. This virtual presence becomes more conspicuous through the devotional elaborations on the argument and from what we called, in our preceding point, a summarizing metaphysical metaphor of physico-theology (which asserts that the world is an emblem or symbol of the divinity). So, on this ground, we may also say that physico-theology propounds an *emblematic* (or symbolically conceived) *presence* of God.

The same holds for the concept of a *life divine*. Physico-theological authors do attribute life to universal nature in hymnic effusions but they seldom analyze philosophically the concept of the life of God. God figures, first and foremost, as a source or cause of life in their theories, and not as the fullness of life, or life itself. ÖTINGER's theology, deduced from the notion of life (*Theologia ex idea vitae deducta*, see below), probably does better service to whoever wants to examine the possible logical relationship between the concept of God and that of life.

On the whole, then, we may say that the results of the physico-theological argument were not exploited in explicit enough philosophical terms by perhaps the majority of classical eighteenth-century physico-theologists. The reason for this, as we have suggested, lies with the doctrinal and devotional character and aim of this theory, which had originally been conceived as an apology of the Christian religion: it was considered sufficient for physico-theology to have proved the existence and major attributes of God.

As far as the intellectual relationship of physico-theology to early German Romanticism is concerned, the philosophers of the world soul, BAADER and SCHELLING in particular, largely depended on the natural scientific findings or theories of MAUPERTUIS, BUFFON and other physico-theologists, and, judging by the references in their works, they were much less influenced by hylozoistic materialistic natural science (e.g., DIDEROT), than by physico-theology. In many cases, they borrowed scientific evidence or methodology from books that used nature mainly to point out the supernatural origin of nature and that made a logically somewhat simplified transition from physical to metaphysical. The philosophical insufficiency of the concept of a not fully definite divine presence, and of that of an indefinite life divine clearly could not satisfy the metaphysical expectations of a generation that was, among other things, interested precisely in *how* the presence in the finite of the infinite may be grasped conceptually, or, *vice versa*, in *how* nature depends on God.

As concerns the concept of the world soul, we may point out in respect of the philosophical relationship between physico-theology and early German Romanticism that we have not found evidence that any of the physico-theologists ever posited a world soul. In this specific domain, there seems to have been no immediate intellectual commerce between the two movements.

In early modern natural science in general, however, there might be one exception: NEWTON supposed that supra-sensible, elastic and all-pervasive materials, “*some certain aethereal spirits or vapours*”, fill out all space and function essentially as principles of life (cf. NEWTON’s letter to OLDENBURG, 25 Jan. 1676).³³ In a later letter to BOYLE (28 Feb. 1679),³⁴ NEWTON described this omnipresent material also as a principle of physical and chemical change, as a mediator and principle of sociability in the events of nature. This Newtonian conjecture may be interesting in the context of the Romantic world soul theories inasmuch as BAADER identified the world soul with an omnipresent heat matter,³⁵ similar in several (but not all) of its attributes to Newtonian *aether*, while SCHLEIERMACHER (tacitly, on account of HERACLITUS)³⁶ identified the world soul precisely with *aether* conceived as an omnipresent and all-pervasive principle of life. Yet, NEWTON had never called *aether* a universal soul, while, on the other hand, he very explicitly rejected the idea that God is the universal soul (cf. Section 9 of Chapter 6). The other physico-theological authors seldom, if ever, took a position on the existence of *aether* or a world soul at all (except for FÉNELON, as we have seen in Section 2 of Chapter 4). This is explained by the circumstance that practically all physico-theologists stand, in respect of theology, on Scriptural grounds and Scripture does not speak of *aether* or a soul of the world, unless one wants to identify the Holy Spirit with either of these, something the physico-theologists never did.

Nonetheless, physico-theology played an important role in the formation of the early German Romantic world soul theories in that the world soul, in the Romantic conception, is certainly a quasi-divine being, a physical image and an instrument of the transcendent God, which even receives the divine attribute of *omnipresence*. Physico-theology offered an adequate scientific method by which BAADER and SCHELLING could make conclusions about the existence of such a corporeal but supra-sensible divine being. As Kantian transcendental philosophy allows of no experience of the supernatural, the Romantic quest for an experience of the infinite within the finite could turn toward a material and finite representative of God, the world soul, which is subject to natural scientific experiment, yet supra-sensible for

³³ RUPERT et al. eds., vol. I, p. 414.

³⁴ RUPERT et al. eds., vol. II, pp. 288–295. Cf. also query 21 of book III of the second English edition (1717) of the *Opticks* (on all these texts, see Section 1 of Chapter 9).

³⁵ Cf. Franz von BAADER: *Vom Wärmestoffe* (1786; see Section 1 of Chapter 9).

³⁶ Cf. SCHLEIERMACHER’s Stoic interpretation of the Heraclitean doctrine of *aether* in “*Herakleitos der dunkle, von Ephesos, dargestellt aus den Trümmern seines Werkes und den Zeugnissen der Alten*” (1807, see bibliography under SCHLEIERMACHER; cf. Section 3 of Chapter 8, main text and footnote).

man, i.e., as immaterial as it can be. For the early German Romantics who were trying to *think* the *presence* of a divine being in what is finite, physico-theology was an important tool or method that helped them articulate perhaps their most fundamental and distinctive experience in the face of critical transcendental philosophy.

Our journey, then, into the source regions of early German Romantic world soul theories has so far shown us two important intellectual traditions (Leibnizianism and classical physico-theology), which are, to a certain degree, in accord about the ultimate metaphysical interpretation of the problematic relationship between *Natur und Gott*. Let us now see if this is true of the third, vast and varied region from which the early German Romantic interest in the universal soul drew inspiration, namely, philosophical Cabbala, Spinozism and mysticism.

Part III
**Gradual Rise of the Concept of a World
Soul in the ‘*Lessingzeit*’. Philosophical
Cabbala, Spinozism and Mysticism:
Böhme and Ötinger; Spinoza, Lessing and
the *Pantheismus-Streit*; Giordano Bruno’s
Influence in the Epoch**

Chapter 6

BÖHME's Speculative Theology (*De signatura rerum*, 1622). ÖTINGER's Cabbalistic Theory of the World as a Glorious Divine Epiphany or *Sh'ekhinā*; and his Problematic Rejection of the Concept of *Weltseele* (*Offentliches Denckmahl der Lehrtafel einer ... Prinzessin Antonia*, 1763)

1 *The Tradition of Philosophical Cabbala; BÖHME's and ÖTINGER's Work*

As we are now setting out to give an introduction into BÖHME's and ÖTINGER's respective, but interrelated, theologies, we have to call to mind that the early modern, Christianized version of the Cabbala posits a profoundly different relationship between God and the world, both from the (traditional or modified) Leibnizian and the physico-theologian standpoints. Style, method and content are also different. It seems appropriate to say, first, that the Cabbalistic discourse, at least in ÖTINGER and his chief Christian source, BÖHME, is, in large part, 'mythological' rather than philosophical, despite ÖTINGER's often artificial conceptualization of BÖHME's metaphysical imagery. Second, as far as scientific method is concerned, it is visibly the result of a prophetic inspiration that frequently defies logic, moulded into a barely sufficient speculative-dialectic form (which is especially the case with BÖHME). Finally, in terms of philosophical content, it is virtually a monism which could be qualified as a specific kind of Spinozism, transferred onto Scriptural theological grounds, in spite of ÖTINGER's explicit effort to mark off his position from that of SPINOZA.¹

All this, however, does not imply that the two authors discussed in the present chapter, BÖHME and ÖTINGER, who had made quite a lasting imprint on the way the early German Romantics and Idealists thought the union of the finite with the infinite, were lacking in theological intuition. On the contrary, their insight was one of the most creative, presenting us with a new elaboration of the Eckhartian concept of the *eternal birth* of the Godhead, of God manifesting Himself, through an exuberance or

¹Throughout this chapter, we are drawing mainly on BÖHME's *De signatura rerum* (1622; ed. PEUCKERT, vol. VI) and on ÖTINGER's *Offentliches Denckmahl der Lehrtafel einer weyl(and) Württembergischen Prinzessin Antonia* (1763) because of the representative, comprehensive character of these works. – The somewhat clumsy title of ÖTINGER's book is often simplified, misleadingly, to "*Die Lehrtafel der Prinzessin Antonia*" in the technical literature, like even in the critical edition of BREYMER and HÄUSSERMANN, which we have been using).

overabundance of the good, in the world, which is “*the eternal birth of God from the most concealed parts of the Godhead into what is manifest*” (“*die ewige Geburt Gottes aus dem verborgensten der Gottheit ins offenbare*”),² an idea qualified as the *autoréalisation* or *automanifestation de Dieu* by E. BENZ, author of a compendious historical and conceptual analysis of ÖTINGER's influence on the early German Romantics.³

In historical terms, it may be pointed out that philosophical Cabbala, in great part based on the anonymous, medieval Hebrew and Aramaic collection of texts called *Zohar* (a Neoplatonically influenced, mystical-theosophical interpretation of the Pentateuch, with many important appendices, see [Section 11](#) of Chapter 7), had had a long tradition in early modern Christian thought. It is enough to mention REUHLIN's *De arte cabalistica* (1517), BÖHME's life work, and Cambridge Platonist Henry MORE's *Triplicis Cabbalae Defensio* (especially part two: *Cabbalae Philosophicae Defensio*, 1679 etc.), as examples. It seems, furthermore, that Cabbalistic literature experienced a revival in Germany during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, as a number of books were published about different aspects of Cabbala (we cite the two most famous: the *Kabbala Denudata*, 1677–1684, by VON ROSENROTH,⁴ and the *Elucidarius Cabbalisticus*, 1706, by Johann Georg WACHTER, on whom see our [Section 6](#) of Chapter 7). We know from contemporary sources (e.g., from texts by JACOBI and HERDER) that these two books were read and very well known by outsiders as well, i.e., by people without a strong command of Hebrew.

A good grasp of Hebrew is necessary for the scholar who wants to study the art of Cabbala in depth; and ÖTINGER, a Lutheran pastor, was among the few who could boast to have such knowledge at his fingertips. He was considered an expert of Cabbala, a reputation well-grounded and proved by his best-known work, the *Public Monument of the Didactic Painting of a former Württemberg Princess Antonia* (*Öffentliches Denckmahl der Lehr-Tafel einer weyl(und) Württembergischen Princeßin Antonia*, 1763). Since, however, this book is essentially a philosophical defence of the Böhman doctrine,⁵ it is almost impossible to understand without getting acquainted with BÖHME's thought first. Much of what is obscure in BÖHME is made clear by ÖTINGER, and much of what is unclear in ÖTINGER is understood after a reading of BÖHME. They mutually interpret each other.

²In ÖTINGER: *Öffentliches Denckmahl der Lehrtafel...*, Chapter *Neue Metaphysische Erwegungen über das Cabbalistiche System, woraus die 10 Ausflüsse Gottes begreiflicher werden*, § 1: *Leben und Selbst-Bewegung seyn die erste Ideen von Gott*; in eds. BREYMEYER and HÄUSSERMANN, p. 170 = p. 210 of the first edition 1763.

³In BENZ, 1987, Chapter IV: *Les sources cabbalistiques de la philosophie romantique de la nature*; especially pp. 56–57. See also BENZ 1955, II/2 (for BÖHME's influence on SCHELLING) and IV (for ÖTINGER's influence on the same).

⁴See the reprographical edition of the *Kabbala Denudata* in the bibliography under PEUCKERT and RANKE, eds.; and our [Section 11](#) of Chapter 7.

⁵In particular, of *Mysterium magnum*, *De signatura rerum*, *De tribus principiis* and *De electione gratiae*; which are titles of BÖHME's works that ÖTINGER explicitly cites in his text.

2 *BÖHME's Speculative Theology as a Philosophy of Nature. The Two Speculative Principles of His Theology*

Studying Jacob BÖHME (1575–1624), however, is like contemplating an overcast sky on a gloomy night, when one can barely make out a few stars – stars that are nevertheless of the first order of luminosity. The Böhmean discourse is an inorganic multitude of parallel or alternative metaphysical theories, never entirely developed, always in the condition of an eternal recommencement. In this discourse, almost any member of BÖHME's set of metaphysical concepts can replace any other member (numerous technical terms are virtually equivalent in meaning), in formulas expressing, through variously established logical relations, always the same metaphysical doctrine.⁶ But despite the interpretational difficulties, this metaphysical core is more or less clearly perceivable throughout, though a definitive-determinative conceptual exposition of the natural philosophical details is lacking, or is in a state of constant fluctuation.⁷

Having said this, however, we become aware that all this just may be symptomatic because the question emerges whether this terminological and methodological insufficiency is not in a degree of correlation with the metaphysical content of the text. A theory of the world as an emanation of God is likely to entail a virtual identity of substance of all that there is,⁸ which seems to lead logically to a certain fuzziness or indistinctness of the technical terms, a phenomenon that we notice, to some extent, in BÖHME's spiritual heir, SCHELLING also (cf., e.g., the middle part of *Bruno*). In other words, the Böhman doctrine of the *signatura* ('the internal nature or structure of a thing essentially determines its outward appearance') may be successfully applied to BÖHME's own discourse as well.

⁶On this point, we cannot agree with W. SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN who says that: "*Jakob Böhme hat die spekulativen neuplatonischen und kabbalistischen Muster der Philosophia perennis tiefgründig und verständig verarbeitet.*" (SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN 2006, p. 157.) BÖHME was certainly inspired by Cabbalistic, and thereby, by Neoplatonic philosophical sources but it seems impossible not to notice that he is an almost completely unsystematic thinker.

⁷Cf. ÖTINGER's artless remark about BÖHME's mode of exposition: "*Wenn man Jacob Böhm könnte in deutliche Sätze bringen, so würde sein System der Seele die meiste Beruhigung geben. Man muß noch ferner arbeiten, biß man Jacob Böhm in deutlichere Sätze bringt.*" (In *Öffentliches Denckmahl...: (Summarien aus Oetingers Philosophen-Manuskript zur Gegenüberstellung von hebräischer und zeitgenössischer Philosophie)*, *Schluß aus allem*; eds. BREYMAYER and HÄUSSERMANN, p. 169 = p. 209 of the first edition 1763.)

⁸In an attempt to whitewash BÖHME, ÖTINGER says the following about the manifold character of the universe eternally coming to be from the unicity of God: "*Dieses alles ist mit keiner Engel-Zunge beschreiblich, weil es in einander zugleich ist, da keines das erste, keines das mittlere und keines das letzte ist, jedoch aber, weil es Stückweiß beschrieben werden muß, damit man von dem Reichtum der Herrlichkeit (= the glorious epiphany of God) doch etwas andeute, als hintereinander und also undeutlich beschrieben werden muß, weil es nicht mechanisch in Figur zu bringen. Jacob Böhm hat es so gut beschrieben, als es möglich ist...*" (*Öffentliches Denckmahl der Lehr-Tafel...*, *(Realparal-lelen vom Geist)*; in eds. BREYMAYER and HÄUSSERMANN, p. 219 = p. 331 of the first edition 1763.)

Böhman metaphysics is a Neo-Platonizing, weak monism. Or, considered from a different angle, it is a *speculative theology conceived as a philosophy of nature*, i.e., a theory about the world coming to be ultimately from God. The first speculative pillar of this philosophy is a singular interpretation of the Christian theological statement that God created the world, through Christ, out of nothing. Here, the word “nothing” is taken by BÖHME to refer to God Himself, whereby creation out of nothing will be a coming-to-be out of God (*creatio ex nihilo interpretatur generatio ex Deo*). Therefore, when he says that God calls the world forth, or lets the world flow, out of Himself, BÖHME is still in *nominal* concord with orthodox theology, by virtue of this identification of God with nothing.

But is it justified, in a Christian philosophical context (and BÖHME is, beyond all doubt, a Christian philosopher), to conceive of God as nothing? BÖHME's answer is positive: God-in-Himself (i.e., God without generated nature) is *as if* nothing, as compared to God-with-the-generated-world, since God would be *as if* “*ohne Wesen*”, *as if* without *manifest* reality, had He not brought forth the world:

8. *Because God made everything out of nothing, and this Nothing is He Himself, in so far as He is a zest for love which inhabits itself, in which there is no passion; but this zest for love would not become manifest, if He remained alone, in rest, without existence, and would not possess any joy or motion, only eternal rest.*

9. *But as soon as He, by virtue of His desire, introduces Himself into existence, His eternal rest becomes existence and operating power...⁹*

God calls forth the world precisely because, thereby, He manifests (and increases) His glory. Without this manifestation, that glory or majesty is not perceived and is not evident. So, He is *greater* together with the world, this mirror-image of His, than He is without it:

...just as eternal freedom (scil. God) with its zest, via the eternal nature (scil. the prototypal universe), through fire introduces itself into desire (scil. desire for the production of the world), and thereby realizes itself on a much higher level, namely, in power and majesty.¹⁰

⁹“8. ... Dann (=denn) Gott hat alle Dinge aus Nichts gemacht, und dasselbe Nichts ist Er selber, als eine in sich wohnende Liebe-Lust, darinnen (=worin) kein Affect ist; es wäre aber also die Liebe-Lust nicht offenbar, so (=als) Er einig in der Stille ohne Wesen bliebe, und wäre keine Freude noch Weben darinnen, sondern eine ewige Stille. 9. Als Er sich aber in Wesen einführt durch die Begierde (scil. God's desire to produce physical nature), so wird seine ewige Stille ein Wesen und wirkende Kraft...” (*De signatura rerum*, chapter VI: “Wie sich ein Wasser und Oel gebäre...”, points 8–9; ed. PEUCKERT, vol. VI, p. 49. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) Cf. the following statement as well: “...so mag doch auch in der freyen affectlosen Lust (scil. der Lust-Wille Gottes, Gott selber) keine Offenbarung geschehen, dann sie ist ohne Begierde, sie ist als wäre sie nichts gegen der Natur, und ist doch alles; ...sie giebet sich freywillig in Hunger der Natur, dann sie ist ein Geist ohne Wesen und Begierde, ganz frey als ein Nichts...” (*Ibid.*, chapter VI, point 2; p. 47.) – In the citations of this chapter, an equals sign introduces a modern equivalent of a more or less obsolete German word, while the abbreviation “*scil.*” introduces an interpretative remark of the author.

¹⁰“...gleichwie sich die ewige Freyheit mit ihrer Lust, durch die ewige Natur, durchs Feuer in Begierde einführt, und damit viel höher, als (=like for instance) in Kraft und Majestät, ausführet.” (*Ibid.*, chapter XIV: “Vom Rade Sulphuris...”, point 74; p. 213. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

Hence, His *perfection* is greater if He reveals His glory in a material image as well, for, as a principle, a spirit on which a body depends has a *higher* degree of perfection than a spirit that is deprived of a representative body. When no body is present, suggests BÖHME, there can be no movement or change (“*Weben*” in our first citation) and, consequently, no real *life* either:

Because everything has arisen (lit. is resurrected) from the eternal Spirit, as a likeness of the Eternal One; the invisible existence, which is God and the eternity, has introduced itself, in its own desire, into visible existence, and manifested itself together with time, so that He is in time, as a life...¹¹

The world is, nevertheless, not said to be the eternal spirit's body; neither is God conceived simply as the spirit of the world.¹² But the world *is* an external show or manifestation (*signatura*) of the *internal* nature of the Godhead. It *is* a fractal-like unfolding of divine interiority since, as a metaphysical rule, all things reveal their internal nature in their external appearance:

*The entire external visible world with all its existence is a token (scil. signatura) or representation of the internal spiritual world; everything that is inside, and according as it is in reality, has its own expression externally...*¹³

This external manifestation of the internal nature of God, whereby divine simplicity or oneness crosses over into a multiplicity of finite corporeal representations, is seen by BÖHME as a succession of a *contraction* followed by an *expansion* of divine power, which is an ancient Cabbalistic idea (*Zusammenziehung Gottes* or *Contraction Dei*, as ÖTINGER will say; see also [Section 11](#) of Chapter 7):

...in the eternal nothing, an eternal will emerges, which intends to introduce the nothing into something, in order that the will may find, feel and see itself, because in nothing, the

¹¹“Dann (=denn) alle Ding sind von dem ewigen Geiste geurständet, als ein Gleichniß des Ewigen; das unsichtbare Wesen, welches GOtt und die Ewigkeit ist, hat sich in seiner eigenen Begierde in ein sichtbares Wesen eingeführet, und mit einer Zeit offenbaret, also daß Er sey in der Zeit als ein Leben...” (Ibid., chapter VIII: “Vom Sulphurischen Sude...”, Point 2; p. 79. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

¹²“Nicht ist sie (scil. diese sichtbare Welt) aus dem ewigen Wesen gemacht worden, sondern aus dem Aushauchen des ewigen Wesens...” (Ibid., Chapter XVI: “Von der ewigen Signatur...”, Point 21; p. 235)

¹³“Die ganze äussere sichtbare Welt mit all ihrem Wesen, ist eine Bezeichnung (scil. signatura) oder Figur der inneren geistlichen Welt; alles was im inneren ist, und wie es in der Wirckung ist, also (=so, in that manner) hats auch seinen Character äusserlich...” (Ibid., chapter IX: “Von der Signatur...”, Point 1; p. 96. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) Cf. also: “Dasselbe gefassete Wort (scil. der siebente Tag der Schöpfung = essentially, the seventh emanation from the Godhead, identical with the generation of the physical world) hat sich... mit dieser sichtbaren Welt, als mit einem sichtbaren Gleichniß, offenbaret, daß das geistliche Wesen in einem leiblichen begreiflichen offenbar stünde: Als der innern Gestalt Begierde hat sich äusserlich gemacht, und stehet das Innere im Aeusseren, das Innere hält das Aeussere vor sich als einen Spiegel, darinnen es sich in der Eigenschaft der Gebärung aller Gestältniß besiehet; das Aeussere ist seine Signatur.” (Ibid., point 3; p. 97.)

*will would not be manifest to itself... ..the will pulls itself back into itself, and finds itself in itself; and its pulling itself back brings about a kind of overshadowing or obscurity in it...*¹⁴

The sequence of this contraction and expansion, which brings about the representation of the divine attributes in physical nature, is frequently referred to, by BÖHME, with the technical term “*impression*” (“*Impression*”). Though using this term would imply that there is already some formless material receptacle, extant beforehand, *into* which an imprint is made by God, BÖHME has a different interpretation. For him, “*Impression*” is an event whereby the attributes of the Infinite Being are expressed in finite things, without any previously extant, primary matter being involved:

7. ...so the eternal will grasped the zest and carried it over into a desire, which formed an impression of itself, gave itself form and made itself corporeal...

8. The same ‘impression’ is the only mother of the mystery of revelation, and is called nature and existence...¹⁵

Along these lines, “*Impression*” is interpreted as the desire of God that carries out a reflexive action (*impresset sich, macht sich figurlich und körperlich*), is embodied or materialized, and is eventually practically equal with its outcome, namely, physical nature (to be differentiated from ideal or prototypal nature, which is in the divine intellect).¹⁶ The first speculative principle of the BÖHMIAN theology of the eternal birth of God is, therefore, expounded essentially in natural philosophical terms.

¹⁴“...in dem ewigen Nichts ein ewiger Wille urstände, das Nichts in Etwas einzuführen, daß sich der Wille finde, fühle, und schaue, dann (=denn) im Nichts wäre der Wille ihm nicht offenbar... ..er zeucht (=zieht) sich selber in sich, und findet sich selber in sich; und sein in sich Ziehen macht in ihm eine Beschattung oder Finsterniß...” (*Ibid.*, chapter II: “Von der Wiederwertigkeit und dem Streit...”, point 7; p. 10. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) Cf. also: “Dasselbe gefasste Wort (scil. der siebente Tag der Schöpfung=die Göttliche Leiblichkeit) hat sich... mit dieser sichtbaren Welt, als mit einem sichtbaren Gleichniß, offenbaret, daß das geistliche Wesen in einem leiblichen begreiflichen offenbar stünde: Als der innern Gestalt Begierde hat sich äusserlich gemacht, und stehet das Innere im Aeusseren, das Innere hält das Aeussere vor sich als einen Spiegel, darinnen es sich in der Eigenschaft der Gebärung aller Gestältniß besiehet; das Aeussere ist seine Signatur.” (*Ibid.*, point 3; p. 97.)

¹⁵“7. ...so hat der ewige Wille die Lust gefasset, und in eine Begierde eingeführet, welche sich hat impresset, und figurlich und körperlich gemacht... 8. Dieselbe Impression ist die einige Mutter des Mysterii Offenbarung, und heisset Natur und Wesen...” (*Ibid.*, chapter XIV: “Vom Rade Sulphuris...”, Points 7–8; p. 195. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) Cf. Point 14 also: “Die Impression oder Begierde ... fasset der Begierde Eigenschaft nach aller sieben Gestalten (scil. the seven manifestative attributes of God) Eigenschaft in sich, und impresset sie, daß aus dem Nichts ein Wesen wird...” (p. 197.)

¹⁶BÖHME sometimes writes (systematically) about an intelligible or prototypal universe (“die ewige Natur”), which is the spiritual body of God (in accordance with the Cabbalistic doctrine of *geistliche Leiblichkeit / Körperlichkeit*, see further under [Section 4](#)), cf., e.g., the following: “... Gott ist Geist, und also (=so) subtile als ein Gedancke oder Wille, und die Natur ist sein leiblich Wesen, versteht die ewige Natur, und die äussere Natur dieser sichtbaren, greiflichen Welt, ist eine Offenbarung oder Aus-Geburt des innern Geistes und Wesens in Bösem und Gutem...” (*Ibid.*, chapter III: “Vom grossen Mysterio aller Wesen”, Point 7; p. 19.)

But before we analyse BÖHME's positive, if fragmentary, natural science, and draw up a systematic balance-sheet of his theology, we have to set down his second speculative principle, which, again, is bound to find a natural philosophical application.

The second speculative pillar of Böhmanian theology calls into mind SCHELLING's natural philosophy, which it in all likelihood really influenced. It is the idea that nature's antagonistic dynamism or tension, necessary for the universe to persist in life, is something that originates from the very nature of God: the incessant conflict of natural forces, the bipolarity and opposition in organic being proceed from the unicity and homogeneity of God. The untraditional view that there is a concealed source of antagonism in the internal nature of the divinity itself, which unfolds ("*Auswicklung*") into the antagonism experienced in external nature (i.e., the *signatura* of the Godhead), ensures that the *absolute* totality of natural phenomena, including all kinds of natural antagonism (maybe even natural evil), may be thought to derive exclusively from the interiority of God (cf. the following excerpt):

There (scil. in the 'impression'), the internal grief by virtue of which God is named an angry, passionate God, and a consuming fire – manifested itself in external figures as in images of the internal birth..., in the same manner as the eternal zest, which is God Himself, awakens and causes the desire for the 'nature' of the eternal revelation, and gives Himself into the desire, and transforms the grief of the desire into an 'empire of joy'.¹⁷

As BÖHME often repeats, there is a certain distress or grief that accompanies the hefty yearning God experiences when He conceives a desire to bring the world forth. That desire is, however, eternal, so the divine *signatura*, i.e., nature, is eternally predestined by the very nature of God to be antagonistic. BÖHME supports this second speculative principle by the authority of the Old Testament also when he refers to the divine names that denote a God undergoing some affection (*der zornige, eifrige Gott*). Yet in theological terms, it is to be noted that all this concerns God inasmuch as He is related to the world because BÖHME often emphasizes that the divinity in itself, considered apart from the generated universe, experiences no affections at all.

3 *BÖHME's Übergang from Theology to Cosmogony and Physics: a Probabilistic Step-by-Step Description of the Origin of the Physical Universe*

So far, we have spoken about the luminosities or at least, more lucid points of Böhmanian theology. The transition BÖHME institutes from theology to cosmogony and physics has a more probabilistic character. This is, however, a philosophically

¹⁷"*Alda hat sich der innere Grimm, davon (=wovon) sich Gott einen zornigen, eiferigen Gott, und ein verzehrend Feuer nennet, in äusseren Figuren, als in einem Gleichniß der innern Geburt... offenbaret, als wie die ewige Lust, welche Er selber ist, die Begierde zur Natur der ewigen Offenbarung, erwecket und ursachet, und sich selber in die Begierde einergibt, und den Grimm der Begierde zur Freudenreich machet.*" (*Ibid.*, Chapter VII: "*Wie Adam in Paradeis, und Lucifer ein schöner Engel war...*", Point 13; p. 59. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI. "*Freudenreich*" is of feminine gender in BÖHME.)

inaccurate statement because, ultimately, in BÖHME'S conception, no part can be separated off from the divine event of the eternal birth of the Godhead in which an eternal unicity, or a seamless continuum, of substance links the divinity up with its manifestation. But, in fact, we are soon faced with a host of alternative, vying attempts, when BÖHME wishes to account for the generation of that manifestation in somewhat more natural scientific terms. We shall have a look at two contending theories, the first of which offers a more detailed pattern:

24. *The first thing before the chaos is the zest for eternity in the abyss (scil. God-in-Himself), which conceives in itself a will to manifest itself; all this is God; and the will conceives in itself, in its zest, a desire; this is the chaos, i.e., the first constellation, where the eternal nature (scil. the prototypal universe) abides, which enters, together with its desire, into seven forms...*

23. *The first body, namely, the chaos, i.e., the first constellation, which is spiritual in character, is the pronounced word coming from the eternal conception; this has, in turn, its own speech in itself; that is the mercuric wheel in sulphur, with the seven forms; which wheel, again, speaks out the four elements: it is in this manner that one thing comes forth from the other.¹⁸*

This brief description of how physical reality is generated yields the following pattern in which the unfolding movement of the divinity takes place from left to right:

<i>Ungrund = Lust der Ewigkeit</i>	<i>Wille zur Selbst- Offenbarung</i>	<i>Begierde = Chaos = erstes Gestirne = das ausgesprochene Wort = die ewige Natur = geistlicher Leib Gottes</i>	<i>die sieben Gestalten / Eigenschaften der Gottheit (the seven forms)</i>	<i>die vier Elementa</i>
(God as an abyss) ¹⁹	(the divine will to manifest Himself)	(desire, chaos, spiritual body of God)		(the four elements)

¹⁸“24. *Das erste vorm Chaos ist die Lust der Ewigkeit im Ungrunde, die fasset in sich einen Willen zur Selbst-Offenbarung, das ist alles Gott: und der Wille fasset in sich, in der Lust, eine Begierde, das ist das Chaos oder erstes Gestirne, darinnen (=worin) die ewige Natur stehet, welche sich mit der Begierde zur Natur in sieben Gestalten einführet...*” “23. *Der erste Leib, als das Chaos, oder erste Gestirne, welches geistlich ist, das ist das ausgesprochene Wort aus der ewigen Fassung, dasselbe hat wiederum sein Sprechen in sich, das ist das mercurialische Rad im Sulphur, mit den 7 Gestalten, das spricht wieder aus sich aus die 4 Elementa: Also gehet eines aus dem andern.*” (*Ibid.*, Chapter XIII: “*Von dem Geistes und Körpers Widerwillen...*”, points 24 and 23; p. 182. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.). The sequence of the points has been reversed to harmonize with the sequence of the events described.

¹⁹W. SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN suggests that BÖHME may have coined the word *Ungrund* himself, as a translation of the Hebrew Cabbalistic term *En-Soph* (SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN 2006, p. 158). But the *Deutsches Wörterbuch* of the GRIMM brothers tells us that this word, at least as a term of law in the sense of “*unrecht, rechtsirrtum*”, had existed since the early sixteenth century (earliest occurrence is from 1527; see point II/1 under this entry in the *Wörterbuch*). BÖHME was, in any case, the first to have introduced “*Ungrund*” into the philosophical nomenclature as, again, the GRIMM brothers point out (under point II/6 of the same entry). Visit <http://germazope.uni-trier.de/Projects/DWB> for an online version of the *Wörterbuch*.

God is an *Ungrund* so long as He does not bring forth the world. But as soon as that happens (and for BÖHME, it has been happening from all eternity), He comes to be the *Grund* of the world. By virtue of the unicity of the divine, God is *Ungrund* and *Grund* at the same eternal moment. So it is by way of a hypothetical reconstruction only that we might say that in the beginning, God conceives an intention of self-manifestation. This intention is accompanied by desire (*Begierde*), which is a form of disarray or disturbance (*Chaos*; in SCHELLING, *Unvernunft* or *das Regellose*) in the order of divine nature. From another aspect, this desire is also the creative Word of God (*das ausgesprochene Wort*), which comes forth from the eternal conception of the Father. The Word delivered by the Father delivers, in turn, the World and is elsewhere, like here, described as *das sprechende Wort* as well, which speaks the World. As BÖHME puts it in XIII/2: “*God united everything into His Word and pronounced them into a form... The pronounced being* *(scil. Christ) is a model of Him who has spoken, and again, has speech in itself...*”²⁰

This *Verbum Fiat*,²¹ the divine λόγος is an ideal archetype of nature, or, in other words, *die ewige Natur*, the prototypal universe in the divine mind. Logically, then, this is also the spiritual body of God, which is elsewhere said to be the pure element (“*das reine Element*”): the numerically one, spiritual substance that will diversify and materialize in the last phase of divine unfolding. This spiritual body spreads out or expands into a spectrum of seven “forms” (in other passages, qualities) of the divinity, the seventh of which is already identical with the generation of physical nature (cosmogony), a generation that takes place under the aspect of the four sublunar elements, and in the bounds of time,²² whereby the *one* divinity has unfolded its infinite essence into an infinite *multitude* of natural beings (ἕν-καί-πᾶν, the one-and-all).

²⁰“*Gott hat alle Ding in sein Wort gefasset und in eine Form ausgesprochen... Das Ausgesprochene ist ein Model des Sprechenden, und hat wieder das Sprechen in sich...*” (*Ibid.*, p. 178. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) Again, the angels and the humans are represented as the “delivered word” of God, while God (or Christ) as the “delivering word” in chapter X, point 42: “*42. Aber die Engel und Menschen sind in das Bilde der Liebe GOTTes gesprochen worden, die solten... im sprechenden Willen GOTTes bleiben stehen, als eine Forma des sprechenden Willens...; ...in welcher Figur* *(scil. the aforementioned Forma) sie da stehen, als ein Bilde des Aussprechens, als ein gesprochen Wort, damit sich das sprechende Wort, als in seiner Gleichheit besiehet, da es die ewige Wissenschaft des ewigen Gemüths damit offenbaret...*” (*Ibid.*, p. 128.)

²¹Cf. chapter VII, point 48 (*ibid.*, p. 68).

²²For an elaboration on the seven (metaphorical-mythological) qualities or “forms” of the divinity, see chapter XIV, point 10; we briefly enumerate them only: 1. *Begierde*; 2. *Bitter*; 3. *Angst*; 4. *Feuer*; 5. *Ausgehung und Licht*; 6. *Stimme und Klang*; 7. *Same oder Wohne* (*ibid.*, pp. 196–197). Each of these stages is a dynamic-dialectic reaction on the preceding stage. Stages (or qualities) 5. and 7. display a likeness to stages in ÖTINGER’s account of the seven representations of God (the *Sephiroth*).—Needless to say, the number seven plays a crucial role throughout philosophical Cabbala. That the seventh quality of God was thought by BÖHME to be identical with the coming-to-be of the visible universe, is supported by chapter XIV, point 32: “*...die siebente Gestalt, als eine Wohne der sechse, aus welcher das Wesen und Regiment dieser sichtbaren Welt ist erboren, und in eine Form nach der ewigen Geburt Recht, eingeführt worden.*” (*Ibid.*, p. 203).

But as we have anticipated earlier, this probabilistic, natural scientific facet of Böhmean theology never reaches a stage of full maturity and coherence. In a number of parallel or alternative theories proposed in the text, there is no question about the seven qualities of God at all. These are then usually replaced by BÖHME's often-blamed triad:²³ *Sulphur*, *Mercurius* and *Sal*, like in the following passage:

...and see here the centre of nature, in three forms: in its primary form, i.e., in the first principle, it is spirit; in the second principle, it is love; and in the third principle, it is reality; and the three forms in the third principle are called sulphur, mercury, and salt.²⁴

To judge by BÖHME's subsequent exposition, these lines are probably to be interpreted in the following manner: the first *Principium*, a spirit "*im Urstand*", is the divinity-in-itself (the divine '*implicitum*'), and the third, later qualified as "*the birth*", "*die Aus-Geburt*",²⁵ is corporeal reality ("*Wesen*") or physical nature; the second principle is probably a mediating agent between them, so it might be ideal or prototypal nature (*die ewige Natur*, which, in more orthodox terms, may be identified with the divine λόγος). Yet, all these together form one single "centre". They are *as if* different aspects of the same, eternal *and* temporal totality (as a consequence of this virtual identification, BÖHME had to defend himself from being accused with identifying Nature and God).²⁶

Sulphur, *Mercurius* and *Sal*, although here they correlate with the third principle only, appear, in the continuation of this passage (and elsewhere in the text), as intermediary, double-faced realities, or qualities conceived as realities ("quality-things"), which are present in the first principle also. Actually, they constitute the transition of Böhman theology into probabilistic cosmogony and physics. They are Janus-faced inasmuch as each of them has both a *metaphysical* reality in the nature of the Godhead (or the first principle), where they represent specific divine attributes, and a *physical* reality in organic and inorganic nature (i.e., the third principle). *Mercurius*, e.g., has a celestial or internal facet (*himmlischer, göttlicher* or *innerer Mercurius*; "internal" refers to the interiority or essence of God), and an external-manifestative facet (*äusserer Mercurius*). While the metaphysical facet of *Mercurius* is later identified with Christ, with

²³ Cf. ÖTINGER's remark: "*Man stößt sich an dem Sal, Sulphur und Mercurio Jacob Böhm's...*" (eds. BREYMAYER and HÄUSSERMANN, p. 243). ÖTINGER, throughout his book, interprets BÖHME's *Sal* essentially with reference to Christ's parables about salt, in the Gospel.

²⁴ "...und versteht alhie (<=hier) das Centrum der Natur, mit dreyen Gestalten; im Urstand, als im ersten Principio, ists Geist; im andern ists Liebe; und im dritten Principio ists Wesen, und heissen die drey Gestälte im dritten Principio Sulphur, Mercurius, und Sal." (Ed. PEUCKERT, vol. VI, chapter II: "*Von der Wiederwertigkeit und dem Streit in dem Wesen aller Wesen*", point 11; p. 11. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

²⁵ *Ibid.*, chapter II 24; p. 15.

²⁶ "*So wird mirs der Sophist übel deuten und sagen: Ich vermenge es in Eines, und halte die Natur für Gott... Deme (=dem) sage ich, er sehe meine Worte recht an, und lerne es recht verstehen...*" (*Ibid.*, chapter VIII: "*Vom Sulphurischen Sude in der Erden...*", point 56; p. 95.)

the Word of God, and with the mysterious “*Werckmeister*”,²⁷ the physical facet is said to be the cause of life (“*Ursach des Lebens und Ragens, auch die Ursach der Sinnen*”).²⁸ These concepts, physical and metaphysical at the same time, bringing together the two extremities of theology and natural science, actually join up finite and infinite being into one continuum of substance or reality, and suggest the presence of eternity and infinity *within* the visible universe – a very Schellingian thesis:

....in every external thing, there are two proprties, one of which derives from time, the other from eternity; the first property, which derives from time, is manifest, while the other is concealed...²⁹

It is important to notice here to what a large extent this speculative natural philosophical idea is present in German Romantic thought. The indissoluble bond of the finite with the infinite (i.e., the concept of the Absolute) is the cornerstone of, e.g., early to middle Schellingian metaphysics (cf. *Abhandlung über das Verhältnis des Realen und Idealen in der Natur*; Bruno, *Über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit* (Einleitung) etc.), and might be qualified as the distinctive, characteristic concept of German Romantic metaphysics as a whole. In Section 3, we have detected the Cabbalistic-Böhman source of this idea. But in order to see precisely to what degree Böhman speculative theology had a formative influence on the German Romantic conception of the Absolute, we have now to draw up, as we have promised above, a systematic balance-sheet of BÖHME’s theology on the basis of our preceding presentation.

4 A Systematic Analysis of Böhmean Theology: the Eternally Incomplete Delivery of the World by God (Gebärung der Welt) Is a Birth of God Himself (Geburt Gottes). The Identity of Cosmogony with Theogony

The central enigma of BÖHME’s theology, as it will have emerged from the previous presentation, is whether there *is* a difference of essence between God and the world and, consequently, which technical term describes best God’s activity aimed at

²⁷For this identification, cf. *ibid.*, chapter VII: “*Wie Adam im Paradeis, und Lucifer ein schöner Engel war...*”, point 48; p. 68. On “*göttlicher Mercurius*”, see chapter VII/23 and 26 (*ibid.*, pp. 62–63); and chapter VIII/56 (p. 94) also. The concept of the *Werckmeister/Baumeister*, an original Cabbalistic concept from the *Zohar*, comes to the fore in ÖTINGER’s *Öffentliches Denckmahl...* also (cf. Chapter “*Übersetzung der Stellen aus dem Sohar...*”, §§ 9–10; eds. BREYMAYER and HÄUSSERMANN, pp. 110 and 114 = pp. 68 and 80 of the first edition 1763).

²⁸*De signatura rerum*, ed. PEUCKERT, vol. VI, chapter II 17; p. 13. “*Äusserer Mercurius*” is further qualified as “*der Amtmann in der Natur*” and as “*der Werckzeug, welchen das innere, lebendige, kräftige Wort* (scil. celestial or metaphysical Mercurius) *oder göttliche Hall führet, damit (=womit) er machet und wircket...*” (*ibid.*, chapter VIII/56, p. 95).

²⁹“...in jedem äusserlichen Dinge sind zwei Eigenschaften, eine aus der Zeit, die ander aus der Ewigkeit: die erste Eigenschaft der Zeit ist offenbar, und die ander ist verborgen....” (*Ibid.*, chapter IV/17; p. 33. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

the coming-to-be of the world: *creation, production, generation, emanation* or *arrangement of parts*? In other words, *is* the world ultimately God and, if not, then what is its principle of identity by which it may be asserted to be substantially different from God?

Our philosophical theological disquisition of the Böhmean concept of God has to start with a consideration of precisely what God does when he causes the world to come to be. In this respect, the first point to be made is that, for BÖHME, formless (or primary) matter certainly does not exist previously to God's productive act, so God is not to be conceived as a demiurge or simple arranger of the material parts of the universe. Second, the world does come to be as a result of the determination of divine will, and all its constituent parts are manifestative of divine interiority, while none of its parts has an origin different from divine will and self-realization.

But the theological question is whether the term "origin" in this statement has a reference to divine *causality* only, or if it extends to the origination of the *substance* of the universe from divine substance as well. In this respect, the decisive interpretative argument is BÖHME's identification of God with the *nihil* of the dogmatic principle *creatio ex nihilo* . Judging by his text, the substance of the world does not come to be from nothingness properly so called (*nihil negativum*), but from divine interiority and, hence, from the essence or substance of God (note that BÖHME refrains from using the word "substance", whereas he often has recourse to the term "essence", *Essenz* when trying to describe the relation between God and nature).

Further, we learn that the divine action by which the world comes to be is in a *reflexive* modality. God carries out an action *on* Himself (as BÖHME often puts it, He gives or leads Himself into the world, " *giebt sich einführet sich in die Welt* "), and it is by this reflexive divine action only that the world *is* , both in terms of *causality* and in terms of *substance* (or reality). In this sense, therefore, the coming-to-be of the world seems a *projection* or *overflow (emanation) of divine essence* rather than a *creation* in the proper theological sense of the term, especially because the outcome of this productive act of God is a latent, internal divine presence in every finite thing:

*Hence, God abides in everything in this very manner (scil. unnoticeably) and the thing does not know anything about God, He is not manifest to the thing either, and yet it receives force from Him...*³⁰

On the other hand, however, BÖHME frequently uses the word " *Schöpfung* " with reference to the coming-to-be of the world,³¹ and he insists that there *is* a difference of essence (i.e., substance) between the divinity and the phenomenal world.

³⁰"Also auch in gleichen wohnt Gott in allen Dingen, und das Ding weiß nichts von Gott, Er ist auch dem Dinge nicht offenbar, und es empfähet (=empfängt) doch Kraft von Ihme..." (*Ibid.*, chapter VIII/49; p. 92. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

³¹Cf., e.g., " *die Creation oder Schöpfung* " in chapter XVI/1–2, pp. 230–231; " *die Schöpfung der Welt* " in chapter III/15, p. 21; etc.

Applying a metaphorical rather than conceptual discourse, he specifies this difference as that between a living being *and* the air exhaled by it, or as that between an apple tree *and* the apple on its bough:

...Creation, ... like an apple is growing on the tree, an apple which is not the tree itself, but grows by virtue of the force of the tree: it is in this manner that everything derives from the divine desire and has been created into a reality...³²

It (scil. this visible world) has been made not out of the Eternal Being but of the exhalation of the Eternal Being, of love and anger, evil and good, as the eternal birth of a particular principle in the hand of the Eternal Spirit.³³

In both examples, however, the metaphorically expressed link between the nature of the divinity and the creature tends to be one of essential-substantial *origin* as well, rather than one of external-instrumental efficient *causality* only: a living being exhales the air from its innermost body parts (from its internal nature), while an apple tree brings forth the fruit from its own being or essence, functioning even as a *material* cause of it.

On the basis of this evidence, it seems reasonable to interpret Böhmean theology in the following manner: there are two dialectically opposed, antagonistic tendencies at work in it, the first of which strives to secure the following two theological theses: *I. a)* that the natural world, in terms of both causality and essence (or substance), is generated exclusively *by* and *out of* God (in other words, that the world is *born* out of God, which is termed by BÖHME “*die ewige Gebärdung*”); ³⁴ and, *I. b)* God’s latent, but effective and operative *presence* (God is present as a *Kraft* or *power*) in the internal nature of the finite manifestations of the divine.

2. By contrast, the second tendency of Böhmean dialectical theology, opposed to *I. a)*, strives precisely to prevent the imminent substantial identification of God and nature that would result from *I. a)*, and shifts the accent of the theological discourse from this (conspicuously posed) thesis of substantial identity toward *I. b)*, the second theological thesis suggesting the effective-operative presence of God only, softening and moderating thereby the first thesis (which could be contested in a Biblical theological context, and could curb the majesty of God, despite the alleged

³²“...*die Schöpfung, ...als ein Apfel auf dem Baume wächst, der ist nicht der Baum selber, sondern wächst aus Kraft des Baums: Also sind alle Dinge aus Göttlicher Begierde entsprungen und in ein Wesen geschaffen worden...*” (*Ibid.*, chapter XVI/1; p. 231. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

³³“*Nicht ist sie (scil. diese sichtbare Welt) aus dem ewigen Wesen gemacht worden, sondern aus dem Aushauchen des ewigen Wesens, aus Liebe und Zorn, aus Bösem und Gutem, als eine eigene Gebärdung eines eigenen Principii in der Hand des ewigen Geistes.*” (*Ibid.*, chapter XVI/21; p. 235. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

Cf. the following statement also: “...*darum ist Gottes eigen Wesen allen Dingen nahe, aber nicht essentialiter in allen Dingen, es führet ein ander Principium, und aneignet sich doch gegen allen Dingen; so ferne das Ding der Göttlichen Eigenschaft in sich hat, so empfähet es Kraft und Göttliche Eigenschaft...*” (*Ibid.*, chapter VI/19; p. 52.)

³⁴*Ibid.*, chapter XIV/25; p. 201.

superiority of spirits possessing a corporeal manifestation). Hence, BÖHME's theology is a dialectical balancing or vacillation between a harder (progressive) and a softer (regressive) theological position concerning the precise nature of the relation between God and Nature.

One more consideration may help us put into more concrete terms and visualize the theological content which is at stake in this dialectic interplay of the two antagonistic tendencies. Exploiting and developing the metaphysical metaphor of the delivery of the world by God, we may conceive the world as an offspring of a divine parent, all the more so because BÖHME often uses the metaphorical name "*Mutter*" as a synonym for "God",³⁵ while, in ÖTINGER, the symbolic figure of the "*Matrona*" fulfils a parallel function.³⁶ Albeit this divine parent (God) effectively bestows birth and life (separate reality and a principle of identity) on its offspring, still the world, this offspring, is, as it were, unable to pass through the *birth canal*, thus being maintained in a stage of *eternal birth*, stagnating in the passageway that leads towards a full independence of reality. In this condition, it is neither really detached from its parent, nor is it, properly speaking, a part of its parent any more: it *is* and it *is not* independent from God at the same time; it is eternally subject to divine *parturition*.

Since we have disqualified the terms *creation* and *arrangement of parts* as inadequate descriptions of what God, to BÖHME's mind, does when calling forth the world; and since we may add that the term *production* is also deficient in as much as it does not express an (undetermined) degree of consubstantiality between God and the world, we may now draw the theological conclusion that the coming-to-be of the world is an *incomplete generation (emanation)* of it by and from God in that *the world is within and without God at the intersection of time and eternity, like God is within and without the world, generating time and yet preserving His eternity*. This implies, in ontological terms, that the world is always *about to be* only, but never properly *is*; it always emanates from God, but it never *arrives* into a condition of substantial independence, so it never acquires a full principle of identity either.

³⁵In chapter XV/21, "*Gott*", "*Göttliches Wesen*" and "*erste Mutter der Ewigkeit*" are used as synonyms. As a result of BÖHME's virtual monism, however, the following longer equation of practically synonymous terms may be set down: *Mutter aller Wesen* = *Natur* = *Impression* = *Begierde* (Gottes) = *Gott*, on the basis of Chapters XIV/11 and 14, and XV/21. "*Mutter*", just like "*Begierde*", has a tendency to denote God in relation to (or under the aspect of) physical nature, but this regularity often does not obtain.

³⁶In ÖTINGER: *Öffentliches Denckmahl...*, Chapter "*Übersetzung der Stellen aus dem Sohar von der Philosophie der Ebräer...*", § 7; eds. BREYMEYER and HÄUSSERMANN, p. 108 (= p. 64 of the first edition 1763). In respect of the concept of the *Matrona* in the tradition of philosophical Cabbala, see the historical explanations in *Teil 2: Anmerkungen* of BREYMEYER and HÄUSSERMANN's edition. In the same chapter (§ 9) of ÖTINGER's book, on p. 110 (= p. 69 of the first edition 1763), a certain "*höchste Mutter*" also appears as an intermediary agent who fulfils tasks related to the construction of the universe, and who is subservient to the sovereign God.

For BÖHME, this incomplete delivery (*Gebärung*) of the world by the divinity is, at the same time, the birth (*Geburt*) of the divinity itself,³⁷ which is realized through (or in the course of) the coming-to-be of the world within the bounds of time:

18. *And the Spirit... had originally emerged from nothingness, and it was the desire for nature, and led itself through every property of nature, through cold and heat, through death in fire, through light, and it abides in nothingness again.*

19. *He tries out and knows every property, because He has gone through all of them, and has left them all; He is like nothingness, but is in possession of everything, goes across heat and cold, and none of these takes hold of Him...*

20. *You must understand me correctly in this way: in eternity, this birth is spiritual, but in time, it is also material; because I cannot say about God that He is (properly) obscurity and fire, let alone air, water or earth...*³⁸

The eternal and temporal character of the divine birth, which is also the delivery of the world, allows that although this metaphysical and physical event takes place in one eternal moment, it still has a history *in time*, where it follows the essentially Neoplatonic pattern *ex Deo* → *per Deum* → *in Deum* (cf. “Nichts” → *Natur* → “Nichts” in Point 18.). In the *eternal* facet of the divine event, however, the delivery of the world by God *coincides with* the return of the world into God, and the birth of God through the coming-to-be of the world coincides with the return of God into Himself, into the dialectically reconquered condition of divine unicity, on a higher-ranking level of reality, as “*the exiting spirit*”,³⁹ and as “(the will)... *that reaches freedom again, (as) the world of light or the empire of joy, or the real Godhead.*”⁴⁰

³⁷W. SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN formulates the following thesis about the relation between the divine will, the eternal birth of God and the coming-to-be of life, in Böhmean metaphysics: “*Der Wille bezeichnet einerseits bei ihm die Potenz, dann aber auch den Akt von der Möglichkeit zur Wirklichkeit, den Akt der Selbstermöglichung... Hier zeigt sich der ewige Prozeß des göttlichen Werdens aus der Unbestimmtheit in die Bestimmung. Gottes Anfangslosigkeit ist zugleich die ewige Zeugung des göttlichen Lebens. Dieses Leben ist Ursprung allen weiteren Anfangs, es ist der Typ aller Prozesse, es ist das Leben schlechthin.*” (SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN 2006, p. 159.)

³⁸“18. *Und der Geist... ist ursprünglich im Nichts geurständet, und ist die Begierde zur Natur gewesen, und hat sich durch alle Eigenschaften der Natur, durch Kälte und Hitze, durchs Sterben im Feuer, durchs Licht ausgeführt, und wohnt wieder im Nichts.* 19. *Er ist ein Probirer und Wissener aller Eigenschaften, dann (=denn) er ist durch alle erboren, und von allen ausgegangen: Er ist als ein Nichts, und hat doch Alles, er durchgeht Hitze und Kälte, und keines ergreift ihn...* 20. *Also sollet ihr uns nun recht verstehen: In der Ewigkeit ist diese Geburt geistlich, aber in der Zeit auch materialisch; dann ich kann nicht von GOTT sagen, daß Er Finsterniß und Feuer sey, viel weniger Luft, Wasser oder Erde....*” (BÖHME: *De signatura rerum*, chapter XIII/18-19-20; ed. PEUCKERT, vol. VI, p. 181. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting added.)

³⁹“*der Geist als der Ausgang*” (*ibid.*, II/21, p. 13; transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

⁴⁰“(der Wille)... *der wieder in die Freyheit eingehet, die Licht-Welt oder Freudenreich, oder die wahre Gottheit.*” (*ibid.*, II/29; p. 16. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

5 *The Eschatological Facet of Böhmean Theology and the Role of Alchemy: the Transfiguration of the Material Body into the Pure Spiritual Element. The Doctrine of Geistliche Körperlichkeit, and Its Importance for the German Romantics*

By virtue of the preceding paragraph, we may say that the unfolding (*Auswicklung*) of the interiority of infinite divine nature in the course of this theogony has an eschatological character as well. God displays a movement from an initial condition in a spiritual body without corporeal manifestations, through a stage of self-realization by dint of the natural universe, toward the end of time, into a condition of a purely spiritual, but qualitatively superior, body. For the corporeal manifestations of the divinity, the end of time is a *transfiguration* of the four earthly elements, which are bound to return into their origin: their numerically one, prototypal form in God's spiritual body, in "*die himmlische Wesenheit & Leiblichkeit*",⁴¹ or *die ewige Natur*. As we have mentioned above, this spiritual body of the divinity, i.e., the intellectual universe, consists of the pure, spiritual, prototypal element, or "*das reine Element*":

All that of which this world is an earthly likeness and mirror, all that is in the divine empire in great perfection in spiritual reality; not only spirit, as, for instance, an act of volition or a thought, but also reality, corporeal reality, sap and force, although inconceivably for the external world; since it is out of the same spiritual reality in which the pure element is... that this visible world was born and made as a sound coming from the essence of all essences.⁴²

The doctrine of the *geistliche Körperlichkeit* (ÖTINGER will prefer to say *geistliche Leiblichkeit*)⁴³ of God thus has a theologonical-cosmogonical, as well as an eschatological application, and under this latter aspect, man is obliged to cooperate with God by the instruments of *alchemy*, for the objective of the alchemist (*Künstler, artista, Philosoph*) is to facilitate the transfiguration of the four earthly elements into the purely spiritual, eschatological element. More precisely, the alchemist was supposed (as we might guess from BÖHME's text) to purify and transfigure *his own*

⁴¹*Ibid.*, XIV/54; p. 209.

⁴²"*Alles das, wessen diese Welt ein irdisch Gleichniß und Spiegel ist, das ist im Göttlichen Reich in grosser Vollkommenheit im geistlichen Wesen; nicht nur Geist, als ein Wille oder Gedanke, sondern Wesen, körperlich Wesen, Saft und Kraft, aber gegen der äusseren Welt wie unbegreiflich: dann aus demselben geistlichen Wesen, in welchem das reine Element ist, ... ist diese sichtbare Welt erboren und geschaffen worden, als ein ausgesprochener Hall aus dem Wesen aller Wesen.*" (*Ibid.*, XVI/20; p. 235. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

⁴³Cf. *Biblisches und Emblematisches Wörterbuch...*, Articles *Cörper* and *Leib* (ed. TSCHIŽEWSKIJ, pp. 100–101 and 407, respectively), where *Cörper* is asserted to be the visible body, *Leib* the spiritual one, while Greek *σῶμα*, says ÖTINGER, translates both German terms. Cf. also what E. BENZ, 1987 says in this respect, in chapter IV ("*Les sources cabbalistiques de la philosophie romantique de la nature*", p. 57) of his book. The terminological difference between *Cörper* and *Leib*, however, is not made by BÖHME; and even ÖTINGER has a tendency of indistinctive usage, especially in the adjectival forms.

body into a spiritual one, thereby cooperating with God in the great work of resurrection and redemption.

Since the universal Christian creed includes an article on the resurrection of the body, the alchemist, says BÖHME, has to facilitate the transfiguration of his own physical body into a spiritual one. But he has to keep in mind that in the alchemistic process, the active principle is always exclusively the Christ. In fact, the very name of the alchemistic process is "*Process Christi*". All of its consecutive operations and stages are repetitions of the respective stages in the sacred event of the redemption through crucifixion, by virtue of which the resurrection of the purified spiritual body will be made possible, through the agency of Christ, and with the assistance of the alchemist. The essence of Christian Cabbalistic alchemy and its importance for the early German Romantic natural philosophers and experimentators (like BAADER and SCHELLING) is in that it strove, *experimentally*, to capture the presence and operation of supernatural forces in what is natural, while BAADER and SCHELLING strove to demonstrate, in laboratory circumstances, the presence and active cooperation, in every physical event and substance, of an imperceptible world soul, identified with *aether*, material but nonetheless semi-divine or quasi-divine because of its omnipresence, all-pervasiveness and vitalizing effect.

After this brief analysis of various essential aspects of Böhman theology, we may ultimately suggest that it belongs in the *coincidentia oppositorum*-tradition of mystical theology inasmuch as it affirms the coincidence of eternity and time, of the one and the many in God, a doctrine which is then completed, in BÖHME, with the original Cabbalistic idea concerning the *spiritual corporeality* of God, and with the (Christian) Neoplatonic teaching of God's emanation along the pattern God → world → God, in the last phase of which God is, as BÖHME puts it, all in all, "*alles in allem*".⁴⁴

6 BÖHME's Unsystematic Concept of the "Seele der großen Welt": a Third Version of Probabilistic Cosmogony

It may now seem difficult to reconcile this not fully coherent, and often terminologically unclear, complex mystical theology with the concept of a universal soul, but the reader does come across, among other undetermined and unsystematized concepts like *Paradeis*, *Universal* etc., the concept of a "*Seele der (grossen) Welt*" in the text of *De signatura rerum*, to which ÖTINGER (negatively) reacts. Thus, we are going to try to insert this – for us par excellence interesting – concept also in the conceptual network of Böhmean theology. We anticipate that the general value of this concept, in BÖHME, is metaphorical rather than literal or technical, though it

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, IX/65; p. 113.

is difficult to tell these two characters apart in the passages where the author actually talks about the soul of the world. The most systematic exposé, then, on “*die Seele der grossen Welt*” is as follows:

Hence, everything is encompassed by number, measure and weight according to the eternal birth, Wisd. 11:22. In their operation and birth, these run according to the law and quality of eternity; and above this grand work, God has appointed only one master and sculptor, who alone can carry out this task; this is his official, i.e., the Soul of the great World, in whom everything lies, i.e., the Reason. Above this official He has set a perfect image from Himself, which shows to the official what he has to do; this is the Intellect, i.e., God's own administration, whereby He controls the official.⁴⁵

As the preceding point in BÖHME'S text (VIII/2) makes it clear, this description concerns the generation of visible reality (*das sichtbare Wesen*) out of the self-realizing desire of invisible reality. So, it is actually a third version of probabilistic cosmogony, set forth in traditional Cabbalistic terms like *Amtmann* and *Meister*, but in an effort to combine that tradition with a theology of the Trinity. By virtue of the additions and clarifications of a subsequent interpretative point (VIII/7), the following alternative cosmogonical scheme results, in which the unfolding movement of the divinity takes place from left to right, and in which we indicate the probable trinitological correspondences in parentheses:

<i>Gott</i>	<i>Verstand</i>	<i>einiger Meister und Schnitzer Gottes = Vernunft = Seele der Welt = Amtmann</i>	<i>Werckmeister = himmlischer und irdischer Mercurius = Leben</i>
(God the Father)	(Intellect, God the Son)	(Reason, the Holy Spirit, World Soul)	(the 'workman', life)

We can see here a new attempt of disuniting and nuancing the transition from spiritual reality into corporeal reality, and of establishing stages in the virtually homogeneous continuum that extends from God to nature. In the scheme, there is a cascade-like delegation of power from hierarchically higher levels on to lower ones: essentially, God the Father institutes a single agent to operate and control the machinery of the natural universe, an agent that is described as the soul of the world, and that is clearly a principle of universal life. This soul of the world, however, is at the same time *Vernunft*, a spiritual reality that is not an independent principle, but hierarchically subordinate to an archetype that it must imitate.

⁴⁵“*Also sind alle Ding in Zahl, Maß und Gewichte nach der ewigen Gebärgung eingeschlossen, Sap. 11:22, die lauffen in ihrer Wirkung und Gebärgung nach der Ewigkeit Recht und Eigenschaft, und über dieses grosses Werck hat Gott nur einen Einigen Meister und Schnitzer (=Bildschnitzer, sculptor) geordnet, der das Werck kann allein treiben, das ist sein Amtmann als die Seele der grossen Welt, darinnen alle Ding liegen, als die Vernunft. Über diesen Amtmann hat Er ein Bilde seines Gleichen aus Ihme geordnet, der dem Amtmanne vormodelt, was er machen soll: Das ist der Verstand, als Gottes eigen Regiment (=Regierung, gubernatio), damit (=womit) er den Amtmann regieret.” (Ibid., VIII/3; p. 79. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) This scheme may echo BRUNO'S philosophical trinitology, in which the Christ is the *intelletto universale* and the Holy Spirit is the *anima del mondo* (see Section 1 of Chapter 8).*

This archetype is *Verstand* or purely *intellectual* reality, probably to be identified with eternal nature (*die ewige Natur*), the intellectual universe, of other passages. From a trinitological point of view, it is important to notice the qualification that Intellect, *Verstand* is a perfect image of God the Father: it is "*ein Bilde seines Gleichen aus Ihme*", which is probably a reference to the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father. It is then God the Son who, by a delegation of power from God the Father, indicates to the Holy Spirit what it has to do. As far as direction and control within the Trinity is concerned, the *filioque* clause of the Toledo synod is thus also observed.

Hence, purely intellectual reality or the Christ, and spiritual reality or the Holy Spirit, mediate between God the Father and the Janus-faced (both metaphysical and physical) *Mercurius*. It is at the stage of *Mercurius*, the commissary of the soul of the world, then, that corporeal reality, conducive to earthly life, comes to be. This pattern is evidently an attempt of rationalization on the link BÖHME institutes between God and the heterogeneity of nature. The first delegation of power is from absolute divine unicity towards a stage displaying multiplicity (variety) carried by a substratum of purely intellectual nature. The second transfer of power is from the world of the divine ideas onto a more instrumental reality, which is conceived as spiritual substance—the term *Seele* here already anticipates the coming-to-be of life. This *Seele der Welt*, in turn, operates through the instrumentality of *Mercurius* (a divine facet of which is elsewhere also identified with Christ), which is life itself, "*das rechte bewegliche Leben*".⁴⁶ Hence, the whole scheme is a gradual, cascade-like flaring out (expansion) of the generative source, whereby it procures itself more and more diversity and corporeality, through a delegation of power to hierarchically lower and lower levels of reality.

Given all this, we cannot characterize the Böhmanian soul of the world as the Platonic demiurge subordinate to the superior God because of one major difference: the *Seele der Welt* is not a fully separate being like it is in the *Timaios*. It is a hypostatized manifestation of God, which is only theoretically identifiable within the event of the eternal birth of God.

The rest of the references to a soul of the world (XIV/3, XI/84) are poignant examples of the terminological laxity of BÖHME's discourse, and barely deserve any philosophical treatment.

We have seen, in some detail, the theogonical-cosmogonical doctrine of the most seminal early modern German mystic. The only facet we have neglected is BÖHME's magical-Cabbalistic philosophy of language. Apart from this, the panoramic view of Böhmanian theology reveals an original thinker, who creatively

⁴⁶Chapter VIII, point 7; *ibid.*, p. 80.

⁴⁷Cf. BENZ, p. 56: "*Oetinger de sa part est inspiré par Jacob Boehme et par la cabbala chrétienne qui est elle-même la source ou plutôt une des sources de l'oeuvre théosophique de Jacob Boehme, avec la seule différence, qu'on connaît bien les sources cabbalistiques d'Oetinger, tandis qu'il semble impossible de prouver (trouver ?) les sources cabbalistiques probablement verbales de Jacob Boehme.*"

adopted (probably from oral sources, as professor BENZ suggests),⁴⁷ and adapted to his Christian faith, medieval Jewish ideas that, although often obscurely expressed by him, are heavy with theological intuition, and which (paradoxical as it may seem) open up a particularly rich interpretative horizon in part precisely because of their obscurity. The implicit Böhman conception of the Absolute, vacillatingly articulated by BÖHME himself, was going to be appropriated and elaborated by the early German Romantic and Idealists, who were avid readers of BÖHME,⁴⁸ while his unsystematic and probabilistic concept of the World Soul proved, at least, that it could be fitted in a Christian mystical discourse. Not the least merit of BÖHME is, however, that he determinatively inspired the thought of a professional theologian and Hebrew philologist, who was in possession and had a profound understanding of Cabbalistic manuscript material in the original Hebrew, namely, ÖTINGER.

7 ÖTINGER's Theology of Glorious Divine Epiphany (Sh[°]chinā or Herrlichkeit): the Ontological Relation of the Ten Representative Manifestations (S[°]phiroth) of God, to the Essence of God

The study of Friedrich Christoph ÖTINGER (1702–1782) is vital for our investigation. He was a qualified theologian (widely read in the physico-theologists and in the Wolffian school-philosophy, acquainted with KANT's early works at least), a personal acquaintance of PLOUCQUET,⁴⁹ a pen-partner of the visionary SWEDENBORG, and the most influential propagator of BÖHME (but, unlike the latter, possessed with a good knowledge of Greek and Latin as well as Hebrew). This pastor, we repeat, was, at the same time, a major source of inspiration in speculative theology for the generation of

⁴⁸On the influence of BÖHME on authors like Louis-Claude de SAINT-MARTIN, Franz von BAADER, SCHELLING and HEGEL, see BENZ, Chapter 1: "*La redécouverte de la mystique*", especially Point (2), pp. 17–21. We cite only one or two of the most important passages: "*C'est encore Franz von Baader qui découvrit en Allemagne, en même temps que Saint Martin, la théosophie de Jacob Boehme. Il considéra comme sa mission personnelle de réintroduire la philosophie spéculative de Jacob Boehme dans la philosophie religieuse et naturelle de son temps. ... Chez les autres philosophes de l'idéalisme allemand, nous trouvons des jugements semblables, dans lesquels on sent la grande émotion suscitée par la redécouverte de la théologie mystique de Jacob Boehme. Hegel lui-même fut adepte de Boehme dès sa jeunesse, et l'a vanté plusieurs fois dans ses oeuvres et dans ses lettres. Schelling est plus réservé, dans ses livres: il n'aime pas à démasquer ses sources et à nommer ses ancêtres spirituels. Mais ses lettres n'en sont que plus franches. ... En général, la correspondance de Schelling prouve très clairement qu'il y avait un échange très actif de littérature mystique parmi les chefs de la philosophie idéaliste allemande.*" (Pp. 19–21.)

⁴⁹PLOUCQUET was one of the respondents on ÖTINGER's disputation *De vi corporum organisatorum adiuvatrice* (Tübingen 1766).

the *Sturm und Drang*, as well as for the early German Romantics and Idealists.⁵⁰ His three main theological books, the *Public Monument of the Didactic Painting of a... Princess Antonia* (*Öffentliches Denckmahl der Lehr-Tafel einer... Princeßin Antonia* (1763; modern critical edition: BREYMAYER and HÄUSSERMANN), the *Theology Deduced from the Notion of Life* (*Theologia ex idea vitae deducta*, 1765; modern critical edition: OHLY), and the *Biblical and Emblematical Dictionary* (*Biblisches und Emblematisches Wörterbuch...*, anonymously published, because of a church interdiction on ÖTINGER, in 1776; modern reprographical edition: TSCHIŻEWSKIJ)⁵¹ are accompanied in his life work by a considerable number of disputations and shorter treatises dealing with, among other things, the philosophy of biology (the concept of life, etc.) and with that of chemistry.

In the presentation and analysis that here follow, we concentrate on ÖTINGER'S speculative theology as it is propounded in his most influential book, the *Öffentliches Denckmahl*, drawing on the *Biblisches und Emblematisches Wörterbuch* and the *Theologia ex idea vitae deducta* as well, whenever necessary for us to offer a better philosophical interpretation of ÖTINGER'S often intricate conceptions.

The *Öffentliches Denckmahl* is essentially an hermeneutical book. It offers an emblematic interpretation of the “*Lehrtafel der Prinzessin Antonia*”, which is a delicate, big-sized painting in the apsis of the *Dreifaltigkeitskirche* in Bad Teinach,⁵² a popular spa up to our day, to be found in the Black Forest. The painting, representing the system of religious Cabbala in emblematic form, was prepared on the order of

⁵⁰Cf. D. TSCHIŻEWSKIJ'S apposite remark in this respect: “*Obwohl seit etwa 30 Jahren bekannt ist, daß Bengel und Oetinger zu den geistigen Ahnen Schellings und Hegels gehören, hat die Forschung längst nicht alle Fragen geklärt, die damit zusammenhängen, und man geht bei der Interpretation der Gedanken Schellings und Hegels fast immer von einer anderen Quelle ihres Denkens aus, von Kant, und vernachlässigt dabei ihre theologische Anfänge, die sicherlich bei den schwäbischen Vätern liegen und von den Fachphilosophen unbeachtet geblieben sind.*” (In ed. TSCHIŻEWSKIJ, *Vorwort*, p. V*.)

⁵¹See our bibliography for all bibliographical details of these three modern editions of ÖTINGER'S works. The “*Biblisches und Emblematisches Wörterbuch, dem Tellerischen Wörterbuch und Anderer falschen Schrifterklärungen entgegen gesetzt*” (ed. TSCHIŻEWSKIJ) is, as its title suggests, actually two books in one: an encyclopedia of Biblical proper names and concepts (good 700 pages long) is followed in it by a shorter *Emblematisches Wörterbuch*, i.e., an alphabetically ordered, emblematic interpretation of a number of *common* nouns from the Bible like *Bäume*, *Salz* etc. After this, ÖTINGER adds a couple of short disquisitions (e.g., “*Was besonders in heiliger Offenbarung sinnbildlich oder nach dem klaren Ausdruck zu nehmen*”), which all explore different theoretical aspects of the emblematic or “*sinnbildlich*” interpretation of the Bible.

⁵²The consecration of the church took place in 1673, as we can tell on the basis of the *Einweyhungs Rede* held by the theologian B. RAITHEN and published in the same year (see bibliography under RAITHEN). This speech is an interesting source of Cabbalistic theological ideas (cf. *Erster Theil. Abfassend die Contenta der Cabalischen Theologi* (= *Theologie*)), and testifies that such ideas were widespread at the time.—The painting itself is reproduced in BETZ (see bibliography), a monography specifically written about the Cabbalistic interpretation of the painting. The church is still in regular ecclesiastic use, with the painting exposed as it was in the time of ÖTINGER, though it is not above the main altar itself. Note that “*Teinach*” is sometimes spelt “*Dainach*” in ÖTINGER'S text, and “*Deynach*” in other sources.

an early Pietist, the princess ANTONIA VON WÜRTEMBERG, in 1663; a century later, ÖTINGER was asked by an acquaintance to give a philosophical explanation of it on the basis of the Jewish mystical tradition. What he eventually did to meet the request was much more than answering the friend's four specific questions, for he composed a whole book, which testifies to his singular incapacity for logical exposition, as well as to his erudition and original theosophical insight. The book as it is consists of a loose succession of some 25 multifarious texts, with the following ones standing out from the multitude by virtue of their theological or philosophical import: an excerpt of a translation, made by K. F. HARTMANN, from a Latin book on the *Zohar* (*Übersetzung der Stellen aus dem Sohar...*);⁵³ a large group of laconic summaries, editorially entitled (*Summarien aus Oetingers Philosophen-Manuskript...*), of the respective philosophies of several XVIIth- and eighteenth-century authors, including NEWTON, MALEBRANCHE, WOLFF and PLOUCQUET; the longer section entitled, *Neue Metaphysische Erwegungen über das Cabbalistische System...*; and the subsections under the modern editorial titles (*Schriftstellen von Geist, Herrlichkeit und Leben*) and (*Realparallelen vom Geist*), respectively. All the rest, however, contain, here and there, philosophically important or interesting clues and, therefore, may not be neglected.

The specific philological and methodological difficulty in interpreting a patchwork discourse of this kind is that the reader never knows to precisely what degree the author identifies with the philosophical positions that are expounded, but often left unappraised, especially since the definition or function of a Newtonian concept, for example, might be different from how ÖTINGER, on his own, would have determined or used it. A further methodological problem is posed by ÖTINGER's own fickle terminology and by the striking, though by far not absolute, lack of analytical argumentations in his discourse. In fact, part of the text is constituted by casual (sometimes utterly naïve, superficial or unfair) remarks concerning other philosophers' opinions.

The several parts of the book, heterogeneous and inorganically linked as they seem, are, nevertheless, all held together by the underlying general philosophical intention of demonstrating that the spiritual as well as material universe came to be (or better, *is eternally coming to be*) as an emanation of the divine fullness (*Fülle, πλήρωμα*), i.e., that the finite world was generated (or better, is being *continuously* generated) by and from God through the representations or manifestations of the ten divine *Séphiroth* or *Abglänze*, grouped together under the polysemantic name *Shéchinā* or *Herrlichkeit* (to conserve the meaning of representative manifestation, we translate 'glorious divine epiphany').

Indeed, the Cabbalistic doctrine of the ten emanations (*Abglänze, Ausgänge, Ausflüsse, Ausfliessungen*) of God is the core thesis, as well as the central interpretational problem of ÖTINGER's theology. This doctrine, borrowed by ÖTINGER

⁵³K. F. HARTMANN translated selected parts of §§ 1–20 of G. Ch. SOMMER's *Specimen theologiae Soharicae...* (Gotha, 1734; see bibliography under SOMMER).

from original Hebrew sources and brought into a degree of harmony with the fundamental Christian dogmas, is sketched by him, in a first approach, in the following terms:

God is pure act. He eternally goes out of Himself into Himself, from one Sephira to another, incessantly. He is a self-manifesting being, an eternal power of representation not only of the worlds, but of Himself, through the seven emanations, as Father, Son, and Spirit, in the abode of the seven spirits, which is the glory of God. This is why He is called the Father and Parent of glory (Eph. 1:17) or of the ten reflected lights.⁵⁴

God's eternal overflow is articulated into ten subsequent *S^ephiroth* (singular: *S^ephirā*; Hebr. "reflection, *Abglanz*"), which further divide, in proportion to their respective degrees of majesty, into a primary triad which symbolizes the three persons of the Holy Trinity, and seven secondary emanations. All emanations are brought forth by God Himself out of His interior nature, with the objective of manifesting His essence. These ten emanations together form the *Sh^echinā* or the glorious epiphany (*Herrlichkeit*) of God.

The ten emanations, then, receive productive limitations, whereby they generate every 'created' finite thing ("Die zehen Sephirot seynd die *Quellen aller Arten und Geschlechter der geschaffenen Dinge*").⁵⁵ Hence, the physical world comes to be because the infinite representations of God meet dialectic opposition or limitation (*Schranken*, as ÖTINGER says elsewhere). The present world is thus something like an embodiment of divine glory, *Herrlichkeit*, which is therefore ultimately the constitutive principle of the physical world as well. ÖTINGER sees the physicality of the representations of God as a universal ontological and hermeneutical principle:

I wanted to remark only one thing here: we must understand that light and obscurity are in the soul physically, not only morally. Whoever leaves out the physical being of Jesus Christ from scriptural notions, on the grounds that he can not make sense of them easily, abandons Jesus' method. Light and glory are constitutive and must be taken physically...⁵⁶

⁵⁴"Gott ist Actus purissimus, Er ist in einem ewigen Ausgang aus sich in sich selbst von einer Sephira zur andern, endelechice. Er ist ein Ens manifestativum sui, Er ist nicht nur eine ewige Vorstellungs-Kraft der Welten, sondern seiner selbst durch die zehen Ausgänge, als Vater, Sohn und Geist, in dem Wohnhauß der sieben Geister, welches ist die Herrlichkeit GOTTes. Darum heißt Er der Vater und Gebährer der Herrlichkeit (Eph. I, 17) oder der zehen Abglänzte." (*Öffentliches Denckmahl, Brief von Oetinger an Jakob Friedrich Klemm*; eds. BREYMAYER and HÄUSSERMANN, p. 94 = p. 33 of the first edition 1763. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, *Erklärung der Lehrtafel der Prinzessin Antonia*; eds. BREYMAYER and HÄUSSERMANN, p. 252 = p. 405 of the first edition 1763.

⁵⁶"Nur eins wollte ich hier anmercken: Licht und Finsterniß muß Physice in der Seele verstanden werden und nicht bloß moraliter; wer das Physicum Jesu Christi aus den notionibus Scripturariis wegläßt, darum weil er es nicht so plausible und deutlich machen kan, der bleibt nicht bey Jesu Methode. Licht, Herrlichkeit ist consitutiv und Physice zu nehmen..." (*Öffentliches Denckmahl: Von Licht und Finsterniß, Schriftstellen, Aus dem Neuen Testament*; eds. BREYMAYER and HÄUSSERMANN, p. 227 = p. 347 of the first edition 1763. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting by ÖTINGER.)

In Cabbalistic theological terms, however, the divinity is the absolutely boundless or the *ēn-soph* (Hebr. אֵין סוֹף “without-bound”, “*Gott, der Unendliche*”) also,⁵⁷ and, therefore, its nature endures no boundaries or limitations. How is its infinite essence logically reconcilable with the finite manifestations? Well, it is precisely because God's nature transcends or exceeds all limitations that it runs over into the ten manifestations, which, as it were, husk off and leave the essence of God, constituting a periphery around the centre.

But although this answer, based on the theological principle *bonum est effusivum sui*, does have a logical coherence, the doctrine of the ten representative emanations of God still wants an ontological specification regarding identity or difference of substance, and regarding the precise nature of the causal relation, between God and the ten *S^ephiroth*, i.e., the spiritual and material universe as representations of the essence of God. At this point, therefore, we have to face what we have called the central interpretational problem of ÖTINGER's theology.

In a first approximation, we suggest that the metaphysical term *emanation* determines most precisely how the universe as a whole relates to God. This is also the term most often used by ÖTINGER himself (*Ausfliessung, Ausgang*), as in the following passage as well, where he describes the coming-to-be of the world, from God:

*Despite this, He (scil. Gott) remains unaltered; in Him, there is no transition from obscurity into light. And yet, He flows out of Himself incessantly as the Father of Lights and pulls everything into Himself as the unalterable fountain of life, whereby He gives Himself number and measure in comparison with the creation, in His glory which manifests itself continuously, over and over again.*⁵⁸

The first theologically important qualification in this passage is that the representative universe not only *comes to be* out of God, but it *returns* also into Him, establishing hereby an eschatological perspective beside the theologonical-cosmogonical one, in the interpretation of the concept of emanation.

Second, we learn that God Himself, God as the Absolute, undergoes no alteration or affection due to the generation and reception of the world. In theological terms, this scheme wants to preserve the transcendence of God, but at the same time, it successfully exploits the concept of the infinity of God: in a *a priori* conceptual terms,

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, (*Gegenüberstellung hebräischer und zeitgenössischer Philosophie; Aus Ötingers Manuskript zur Verbesserung der Zinzendorfschen Ideen von der Dreyeinigkeit*), § 8: *Nähere Darstellung des Juden-Systems*; eds. BREYMAYER and HÄUSSERMANN, p. 133 = p. 128 of the first edition 1763. Cf. further ÖTINGER's elaboration on the concept of the boundless one: “*GOTT ist die unergründliche Tiefe, der Aen Soph, der oben an der Tafel (= in the painting) stehet, der in sich selbst wohnt, dieser will sich den Geschöpfen mittheilen. Darum heißt der erste Ausgang aus dem Aen Soph, aus dem Ungrund, « ursprünglich »...*” (*Ibid.*, (*Brief von Oetinger an Jakob Friedrich Klemm*); eds. BREYMAYER and HÄUSSERMANN, p. 93 = p. 29 of the first edition 1763).

⁵⁸“*Er (scil. Gott) bleibt aber dennoch unveränderlich, es ist in ihm kein Übergang aus der Finsterniß ins Licht, und dennoch (!) fließt er unaufhörlich als der Vater der Lichter aus sich selbst aus, und zieht alles in sich als die unveränderliche Quelle des Lebens, dardurch gibt er sich selbst Zahl und Maase gegen der Creatur in seiner sich stets neu offenbahrenden Herrlichkeit.*” (*Ibid.*, *Predigt auf das Fest der Heiligen Dreyeinigkeit*, section *Abhandlung*; eds. BREYMAYER and HÄUSSERMANN, p. 247 = p. 393 in the original edition 1763. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

God as the absolutely infinite can or even has to be thought as infinitely *productive* as well.

But ontologically speaking, is there an essential difference between the Absolute and its emanations? How does ÖTINGER try to specify the ontological difference between the unalterable, productive centre and the representative periphery? In other words, how are we to interpret, in ontological terms, the statement that the spiritual and material universe come to be *out of* God? Our tentative answer to this question is that ÖTINGER does not succeed in determining the real difference in a philosophically satisfying manner because, on the one hand, he intends to safeguard the substantial difference of God from His glorious epiphany (*Herrlichkeit*), while, on the other hand, he insists on God being the only origin of the *substance* of the emanations. We may postulate this on the logical ground that if the emanations are to be *essential* manifestations of the interior nature of God, then there must be a communication of essence between interior and exterior, otherwise the emanations are not representative. In other words, once the actuality or existence of the emanations originates in the essence of God, not in pre-existent primary matter, or in nothingness (as in Biblical theology), then, inevitably, the substance also of the emanations has to originate in the same. ÖTINGER, however, never admits this. Consider how he characterizes the complex interrelationship between God and His *Herrlichkeit* in the following statements:

"Glory and Spirit (scil. Gott) are indeed different, yet one. Glory is the corporeal or bodily manifestation of that which is concealed in the Spirit."⁵⁹

"This glory is not God Himself but is inseparable from God. Hence, it is all that which the most intimate part of God turns towards the outside."⁶⁰

...God, who is Himself His own centre, and the outside thereof. Through this outside, the Shechina, He reveals Himself. God in Himself is His own centre, and the Shechina is His outside... This outside is not changed (essentially) by what is inside, in order that it is recognized as an outflowing of God, and that it is not regarded as a thing separate from God, because both from outside and from inside, it conceals God in itself.⁶¹

⁵⁹*"Herrlichkeit und Geist (scil. Gott) ist zwar unterschieden, aber doch eins. Herrlichkeit ist die Körperliche oder leibliche Manifestation dessen, was im Geist verborgen ist." (Ibid., Schriftstellen von Geist, Herrlichkeit und Leben, section Die Worte, die Jesus und seine Apostel vom Geist gebraucht...; p. 193 = p. 263 in the first edition 1763. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) An almost literal echo of this is as follows: "Herrlichkeit GOTTes, obwohl unterschieden, doch eins mit GOTT." (Ibid., (Summarien aus Oetingers Philosophen-Manuskript...), section Lehre des Propheten Ezechiels von den Seelen...; p. 166 = p. 204 in the first edition 1763.)*

⁶⁰*"Diese Herrlichkeit ist nicht GOTT selbst, aber von GOTT unzertrennlich. Sie ist also alles, was das innerste der Gottheit heraus kehrt." (Ibid., section Realparallelen vom Geist; p. 203 = p. 288 in the first edition 1763. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)*

⁶¹*"...GOTT, der selbst seine Mitte und dessen äusseres, als wodurch er sich offenbahret, die Schechina, ist. Gott ist in sich seine Mitte, und Sie, die Schechina, ist sein äusseres... sie wird aber durch das Innere nicht geändert, damit man erkenne, Sie seye ein Ausfluß von GOTT, und man solle sie nicht so gar abgesondert betrachten. Denn auswendig und innwendig hält sie ihn (scil. Gott) in sich verborgen." (Ibid., Übersetzung der Stellen aus dem Sohar..., § 8; p. 109 = pp. 65–66 in the first edition 1763. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)*

In the last passage, we are explicitly told that God is identical with His own 'exterior', manifestative part; and though this thesis is a citation from the *Zohar* and therefore poses a philological-interpretational problem, ÖTINGER's own position is difficult to isolate from it. In a passage interpreting EZECHIEL's visions, he allows that "in His glory, i.e., self-manifestation, God puts on creature-like modes or limitations" ("Gott nimmt in seiner Herrlichkeit oder manifestatione sui creatürliche modos oder Schranken an").⁶²

The question then emerges as to how his theology is to be defended from the potential accusation of Spinozism? ÖTINGER defends himself by pointing out that Spinozists deprive God of His liberty ("Sie machen GOTT zu einem necessitirten Wesen, das keine Freyheit hat; ... es ist alles eine einige nothwendige Substanz, wir sind nur Einschränkungen und Modifikationen davon..."), and that they deprive the creatures also of their (substantial and moral) independence ("Ich habe *scil.* on the Spinozistic supposition) keine besondere Selbst-Bewegungs-Quelle in mir. Ich bin ein einiger Ausfluß der einigen ewigen Substanz").⁶³ However, as even the partial identity of terminology demonstrates (*modus* with ÖTINGER, *Modifikation* with SPINOZA; *Ausfluß* in both), it is extremely difficult to tell the two positions apart in ontological terms.

To give a tentative answer to the two queries proposed above concerning the ontological and causal relation, respectively, of God toward His ten manifestations, we might say that ÖTINGER certainly moves on the strait borderline between ecclesiastically and dogmatically tolerated mysticism and unconventional pantheism. That he sometimes effectively crossed over into the latter, and not only in terms of overbold usage of language, ultimately instigated the church authorities to impose silence on him. But his true theological intention and insight were nevertheless positive, enriching and historically seminal. In respect of our query about causality, his intention is to demonstrate God to be the *formal* cause (the divine intellect designs the ideal forms of finite representations), the *final* cause (the aim of the generation of the world is to manifest divine glory), as well as the *efficient* cause (the world comes to be by the productive determination of divine will only) of the existence of the spiritual and material universe. In respect of the *material* cause, it seems reasonable to suggest that albeit God's *material* causality also would follow as a postulate from the exclusively divine origin of the *reality* (hence, of the *substance* also) of the universe, this is a conclusion which is explicitly *not* drawn by ÖTINGER. Hence, an impartial interpretation could stop at this point and propose the nuanced appraisal that though the world, to ÖTINGER's mind, does come to be *from* (the direction of) God (*de Deo*, πρὸς θεοῦ), it still can not be thought to come to be *out of* God

⁶²*Ibid.*, ⟨*Summarien aus Oetingers Philosophen-Manuskript...*⟩, section *Lehre des Propheten Ezechiels von den Seelen...*, p. 167 = p. 205 in the first edition 1763.

⁶³Both citations *ibid.*, *Neue metaphysische Erwegungen...*, § 6: *Wiederlegung der Pantheisten*; p. 173 = p. 218 of the first edition 1763. ÖTINGER marks himself off from SPINOZA by referring to the individual's moral freedom, conceived as a principle of identity: "Ich weiß es, daß ich in ihm (= Gott) lebe, mich bewege und bin, und zwar als ein Wesen, das sein Centrum der Freyheit in sich hat." (*Ibid.*)

(*ex Deo, ἐκ θεοῦ*). ÖTINGER's ontological position is thus open-ended: it opens a vista in which theological intuition may intuit several alternative possibilities and keep them in suspense. In methodological terms, this means that in the greatest part of his book he treats glorious divine epiphany without explicitly examining how the material universe is generated from it.

It appears that with this, we have answered the ontological query as well. Although the (spiritual and material) emanations *are* the divine essence (substance) turned outwards, ÖTINGER rejects their *full* (substantial) identity with God, allowing an identity of *origin* only.

Around the divine centre, then, the universe is a halo or periphery that is eternally generated from the divine unicity, acquiring an apparent or transitory principle of self-identity, and then returning eternally into the divinity. It gushes forth and sinks back, always in a transition. Some further philosophical specifications shall come from our subsequent presentation of ÖTINGER's fragmentary cosmogony.

When all is said and done, one feels tempted to affirm that *Ötingerian* fundamental theology is basically a more conceptual and less visual (or image-based) version of *Böhmean* speculative theology, since there is a high degree of concord between them regarding the doctrine of emanation. In fact, it is certain that there is an essential genetic connection between these two theologies.

8 *ÖTINGER'S Metaphysics: the Ontological Eminence of Spiritual Corporeality. God's Spiritual Body. The Mutual Transformability of Spiritual and Material Substance (Corporificatio and Essentiatio)*

After this fundamental theological and ontological discussion of the Ötingerian concept of emanation, it is reasonable to consider the first element of the problematic transition he establishes from the concept of God toward the concept of Nature. The first stage of this fragmentarily described transition from theology into natural philosophy is realized through the concept of the *expansion of God*: namely, the first *S^ephir* (in trinitological terms, the Father) is conceived by ÖTINGER as an expansion (*Ausbreitung*) of the original unicity of God, in a spiritual dimension:

Through the first (S^ephirā), God comes forward in the form of a crown, i.e., as the immeasurable periphery of the expansion of His innermost point (Ps. 150:1) – or concentration –, in order to reveal Himself.⁶⁴

The complex theory of the cosmogonical-theogonical expansion of God is an essential part of the theological doctrine of the ten manifestations of God; hence, it

⁶⁴“Durch die erste (S^ephirā) tritt GOTT als eine Crone oder unermessliche Peripherie der Ausbreitung seines innersten Puncts (Ps. 150, 1) oder Concentration zu seiner Selbst-Offenbarung heraus.” (*Ibid.*, Brief von Oetinger an Jakob Friedrich Klemm; p. 93 = p. 29 of the first edition 1763. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

deserves careful analysis. This theory apparently breaks down into at least two separable but highly interrelated aspects or constituents: 1) the theory of God's spiritual corporeality; and 2) the theory of spiritual space as the *sensorium Dei*, God's 'sense organ' (see [Section 9](#)).

We mention, for the sake of precision, that in the *Öffentliches Denckmahl*, there is even a marginal theory of the productive *contraction* of God ("*Zusammenziehung Gottes*"), which is an alternative account of the generation of the world. In terms of this Cabbalistic idea, ÖTINGER explains, God is thought to contract rather than expand Himself, submitting His infinite essence to finite limitations, thereby producing the several different parts of the universe (for more detail on the historical origin and philosophical interpretation of this *contractio Dei*, see our [Sections 11 and 12](#) of Chapter 7 below).

Given that ÖTINGER's preference is for a theory of expansion, this theory of the contraction of God receives far less attention from him than it does from BÖHME. In fact, there is only one reference to it in the *Öffentliches Denckmahl*, in a description that ÖTINGER gives of the Jewish Cabbala,⁶⁵ first distancing himself from it, then interpreting this visualizing-imaginative theory in purely conceptual terms. We mention this reference because it might play a role in raising LESSING's interest in the doctrine of the contractions and expansions (i.e., the *pulsation*) of God conceived as the *Weltseele* (see *infra*, [Section 11](#) of Chapter 7). Further, a version of the same doctrine, as professor BENZ points out, reappears in SCHELLING's *Die Weltalter* (1814, posthumously published by SCHELLING *filius* in 1861) also, in the following metaphorical metaphysical statement:

*The entire spatially extended universe is nothing but the swelling heart of the Godhead, which exists in a condition of continuous pulsation, or alternation of expansion and contraction, entertained by invisible forces.*⁶⁶

Returning now to ÖTINGER, the first constituent of the theory of the cosmogonical expansion of God, the speculative theory of spiritual corporeality, involves a conceptual and evaluative distinction between *incorporeal reality*, *spiritual corporeality*

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, ⟨*Gegenüberstellung hebräischer und zeitgenössischer Philosophie*⟩, section ⟨*Aus Oetinger's Manuskript...*⟩, § 8: *Nähere Darstellung des Juden-Systems*, Point I: "Da ließt man von einem Zimzum, d.i. Zusammenziehung Gottes in sich selbst, damit er habe schaffen können. Dieses klingt sehr crass von GOTT. Man muß aber wissen, daß, wenn man alles Bild wieder hinweg scheidet, nichts übrig bleibt, als daß GOTT, der Unendliche, nicht habe wollen aus Noth der Unendlichkeit unendliche Dinge schaffen, sondern aus Freyheit seines Willens habe er sich selbst Schranken gesetzt und nach einem gewissen Vorsatz alles in endliche Zeiten, Oerter und Vorwürfe ausgestellt, was er schaffen wolte." (P. 133 = p. 128 of the first edition 1763.)

⁶⁶"Das ganze räumlich ausgedehnte Weltall ist nichts anderes als das schwellende Herz der Gottheit, das durch unsichtbare Kräfte gehalten in beständigem Pulsschlag oder Wechsel von Ausdehnung und Zusammenziehung fortduert." (Part C: *Die wirkliche Seyns-Annahme... Gottes*, b) *deren Wirklichkeit*, β) *Folge dieses Hervortretens Gottes als verneinenden Willens*, aa) *Construktion des Weltalls*; in ed. SCHELLING *filius*, Abth. I, vol. VIII, p. 326. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) See BENZ 1987, Chapter IV: *Les sources cabbalistiques...*, p. 64.

and *merely material reality*. These ontological categories are set in a hierarchical order, in which spiritual corporeality takes precedence over the rest. As a result of the theologonical evolution, spiritual corporeality eventually manifests itself in material corporeality, by dint of a philosophically barely qualified transformation of substance. ÖTINGER affirms that pure spirit, and even the more materially constituted soul, is bound to take on first a spiritual body (*Leib*), then a material one (*Cörper*), in order to achieve full perfection:

No soul, no spirit can appear without a body, no spiritual thing can be perfect without a body. All that is spiritual is, in addition, also corporeal; this is why God Himself wants to be revealed in flesh, and it is in a corporeal manner that all the plenitude of God must abide in Christ. A being which is pure spirit is something crude and barren. Away with the Platonic and Leibnizian fancy that only spirits are real things, whereas bodies are only phenomena, not realities.⁶⁷

Before, however, we go on to see how this substantial transformation of spirit is conceived in a little more detail by ÖTINGER, we have to find out how he applies the attribute of spiritual corporeality to God. What does the spiritual corporeality of God mean here at all, in precise metaphysical terms? What is the divine spiritual body like?

First, on the ground of our fundamental theological introduction, we have to point out that the preliminary distinction between the respective concepts of God considered in Himself *and* God considered under the aspect of His manifestations, is, in exact metaphysical and logical terms, *imaginary*. Although *conceptually*, God may be isolated from His emanations, it is impossible to enforce this isolation *in reality*.

⁶⁷“Keine Seele, kein Geist kan ohne Leib erscheinen, keine geistliche Sache kan ohne Leib vollkommen werden. Alles, was geistlich ist, ist dabey auch leiblich; darum will GOtt selbst im Fleisch offenbar seyn, und leiblich solle alle Fülle GÖttes in Christo wohnen. Ein purer Geist ist roh und bloß. Hinweg die Platonische und Leibnizische phantasmata, daß allein die Geister ὄντα (Wesen) seyen, Leiber seyen nur φαινόμενα (Erscheinungen), keine Wesen.” (In ÖTINGER: *Öffentliches Denckmahl...*, chapter *Von Licht und Finsterniß*, section *Gegeneinander-Stellung der Philosophischen und Schriftmäßigen Art...*, subsection *Weitere Ausführung des Grund-Begriffs vom Saltz*, point XIII; eds. BREYMAYER and HÄUSSERMANN, p. 242 = p. 382 of the original edition 1763. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting by ÖTINGER.)—The principle of the precedence of spiritual corporeality is announced by the following famous statement as well: “*Leiblichkeit ist das Ende der Werke GÖttes, wie aus der Stadt GÖttes klar erhellet Offenb. 20.*” (*Biblisches und Emblematisches Wörterbuch*, article *Leib, Soma*; ed. TSCHIZÉWSKI, p. 407.) We are told by R. BREYMAYER that this citation is “*das wohl bekannteste Zitat des schwäbischen Theologen Friedrich Christoph Oetinger*” (in eds. BREYMAYER and HÄUSSERMANN, p. 1). As concerns terminology, note that although *Körper Körper* usually refers to the material body, and *Leib* to the spiritual body (see the related articles in the *Wörterbuch*) in ÖTINGER, this regularity is not always observed by him, since it is mainly the context (or the preceding epithet) that determines the actual meaning of these terms. This holds, in particular, of the passage here cited, in which “*Leib*” and “*leiblich*” are apparently used as umbrella-terms, with reference both to spiritual and material body (“*Fleisch*”).

God might perhaps be *thought* without His manifestations, but in reality, He *is not* without them:

*Hence, God can never be considered without the expansion of His power (Ps. 150:1), without the 'element', without a spiritual centre of motion in the 'element'.*⁶⁸

Next, if the concept of God "*ausser aller Natur, ausser Raum, ausser Zeit, ohne Bewegung*"⁶⁹ can thus be qualified imaginary, then we may say that the concept of God as He really is (*definitio realis*) is basically construed by ÖTINGER as that of the absolute spirit or *Geist* having a manifestative spiritual body. Hence, we may locate the essential (or real) definition of God in the topological domain of the doctrine about spiritual corporeality, by virtue of a combination of the two following definitions or descriptions:

*God is... a spirit, that is, an all-pervasive, all-vivifying being, which manifests itself especially in the souls.*⁷⁰

Hence, spirit is something penetrable like the air, an *ens penetrabile*, a being which gives way and can put on another form but cannot be touched.⁷¹

Two of the most essential and distinctive elements of the real definition of God are stated in these definitions. First, God is conceived as a vivifying principle or even, as we read elsewhere, as life itself, indissoluble life, ζωή ἀκατάλυτος,⁷² i.e., as a substantially unified plurality of infinite powers ("*...ein unauflöblich Leben in dreyfacher Göttlicher Bewegungs-Quelle, in Verschiedenheit der Kräften, welche doch alle in einander nur eine Kraft seyn*").⁷³ Second, God is not only an

⁶⁸"Gott kan also niemahl ohne Ausbreitung seiner Stärke (Ps. 150, 1), ohne Element, ohne geistliches Bewegungs-Centrum in dem Element betrachtet werden." (*Öffentliches Denckmahl, Neue Metaphysische Erwegungen...*, § 12: *Der Herrlichkeit GOTTes zerschiedene Eigenschafften*; eds. BREYEMAYER and HÄUSSERMANN, pp. 178–179 = p. 230 in the first edition 1763. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) For an elucidation on the term "Element", see below.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, p. 178.

⁷⁰"Gott ist... ein Geist, das ist, ein alles durchdringendes, alles belebendes und besonders in den Seelen sich offenbahrendes Wesen." (*Ibid.*, *Predigt auf das Fest der Heiligen Dreyeinigkeit*; p. 245 = p. 389 in the first edition. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

⁷¹"Geist ist also etwas, wie die Luft, druchdringliches, ein *ens penetrabile*, ein Wesen, welches nachgibt und umgestaltet, aber nicht berührt werden kann." (*Ibid.*, *Schriftstellen von Geist, Herrlichkeit und Leben*, section *Die Worte, die Jesus und seine Apostel vom Geist gebraucht...*; p. 183 = p. 239 in the first edition. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) ÖTINGER here explains Luke 24:37.

⁷²Cf. "Gott ist ein unauflöblich Leben..." *Ibid.*, (*Summarien aus Oetingers Philosophen-Manuskript...*), section III: *Vergleichung der Wolfischen Philosophie mit der Cabbalistischen*; p. 148 = p. 162 in the first edition. Despite its title, this section of the *Philosophen-Manuskript* is not so much a real comparison, as it is, rather, a disconnected list of casual evaluative remarks about Wolffian natural theology. Hence, the theses, in all likelihood, express ÖTINGER's own views, not those of WOLFF.—A typical interpretational problem lying with ÖTINGER's text.

⁷³*Ibid.*, *Neue Metaphysische Erwegungen...*, § 11: *Die drey Bewegungs-Quellen in GOTTes Herrlichkeit*; p. 178 = 229 in the first edition. Cf. further the continuation of the citation: "*Daher ist das höchste Attributum GOTTes ἀκαταλυσία, ἀφθαρσία, ἀθανασία. Weil zwar viele Kräften und Quellen zu würcken beysammen seyn, aber in einem ewigen Band der Unzertrennlichkeit...*"

ens penetrans (“alles durchdringendes... *Wesen*”), but an *ens penetrabile* also. By virtue of this attribute, we come to the discussion of perhaps the most distinctively Ötingerian concept, that of penetrability (*penetrabilité*), an essential qualification of the spiritual corporeality of God.

Penetrability is conceived by ÖTINGER to be the attribute of spiritual substance. It is an essential quality that does not demand a material substrate, but which nonetheless admits extension. It is the capability of the divine spiritual and intelligible substrate to take on *forms* (the archetypal, productive forms, as we may postulate). By the attribute of penetrability, spiritual substrate is more accurately qualified as flexible (“*nachgiebig*”). Yet, as a result of the essential unification of the plurality of forms present in divine simplicity, the extension of spiritual substance does not imply *divisibility*. Hence, this kind of extension seems to possess only the logical or mathematical divisibility of an exact whole number higher than 1. Further, the divine spiritual substance that we have characterized so far is identified with the pure spiritual “*Element*” or the *prima materia*, a concept we first met in the theological alchemy of BÖHME, to whom ÖTINGER explicitly refers in this respect:

Being penetrable is not the same as being divisible. To divide is to separate the parts from each other; to penetrate is to make oneself suitable for the introduction of forms, without any separation of the parts, in a yielding way. In the course of this, an internal mobility is at work, a tendency to yield but no separation of parts. Such a substance is the primordial matter in Jacob Böhme, in the doctrine of the seven forms. This is a struggling force...⁷⁴

To answer our query about the metaphysical determination of the spiritual corporeality of God, it seems reasonable to suggest that extended spiritual substance is so conceived here as to serve as an ontological transition between the respective concepts of God considered in Himself, and that of material substance. Extended spiritual substance (the spiritual body of God) is essentially a philosophical mediation that establishes a logically more or less satisfying connection between the otherwise substantially different extremities of the hierarchy of being.

This brief exposition of the two main Ötingerian attributes of God's spiritual body, *vivification* (as a substrate, it carries and distributes life itself) and productive *penetrability*, allows us logically to proceed to the next stage of the transition ÖTINGER institutes from theology into the philosophy of nature in accordance with his theory of the *cosmogonical expansion of God*. The subsequent element of this theory concerns the substantial and generative transformation of spirit, already having a spiritual corporeality or dimension, into matter.

The doctrine of the materialization of spirit philosophically presupposes the transformability of spiritual substance, which is stated by ÖTINGER as a principle

⁷⁴“...*Penetrabel seyn ist nicht gleichviel mit divisibel seyn. Dividiren heißt, die Theile separiren; penetriren heißt, ohne Separation der Theile sich zur Einführung der Formen in nachgebender Art schicken. Es ist dabey eine innere Beweglichkeit, ein nachgeben, aber keine Zertheilung in Stücke. So ein Wesen ist die prima materia des Jacob Böhms in den sieben Gestalten, das ist eine ringende Kraft...*” (*Ibid.*, *Neue Metaphysische Erwegungen...*, § 12; p. 180 = p. 233 of the first edition. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

("der Geist {kan} zu einem Körper werden").⁷⁵ Importantly, this is a reversible principle: material substance also transforms into spiritual substance. While a cosmogonical-theogonical transformation of spirit into matter is a *corporificatio* or *specificatio*,⁷⁶ the reverse (psychological-constitutive and eschatological-reductive) process is an *essentiatio* or *simplificatio*. We put off the presentation by citation of ÖTINGER's concept of *corporificatio* to Section 10 because it is involved in his fragmentary cosmogony. As we shall see there a bit more amply, *corporificatio* or *specificatio* is a process by which *Geist* gains physical dimension and reality.

Second, the technical terms *essentiatio* and *simplificatio*, as we have anticipated, have a *psychological-constitutive* sense when they are used with reference to the unification, by the divine Word, of the several faculties of the soul, while they have an *eschatological-reductive* sense when they refer to the generation of the spiritual body of the resuscitated at the end of time. Their psychological-constitutive meaning is illustrated by the following, significant passage:

*This (scil. the development in the will, of a capacity of self-manifestation) can not take place without the appearance of the eternal Word in the soul; this appearance unifies everything material that can be thought of. It brings union into the soul. By virtue of this unification, a rough combination of several forces cannot persist (scil. in the soul) but these forces are reduced to one essence. This means that as they come to be, they first resist each other but then penetrate each other and eventually, they merge into one pure active spiritual element. Thereby, a volatile substance turns into a steady one, an extended substance turns into a concentrated one...*⁷⁷

When used in an eschatological sense, on the other hand, *essentiatio* and *simplificatio* denote the process whereby *Cörper* is simplified (i.e., reduced) into spiritual *Leib* at the end of time ("...so muß Fleisch eine Verdünnung annehmen können, durch Ausdünstung, daß es zu Geist werden kan").⁷⁸ The common conceptual element in the psychological as well as the eschatological usage is, however, that the unified spiritual essence of a particular finite being is generated from the (possibly

⁷⁵*Biblisches und Emblematisches Wörterbuch*, article "Cörper, Soma, chros"; ed. TSCHIŽEWSKIJ, p. 100 (with subordinate word order rearranged).

⁷⁶"Diß kan nicht geschehen ohne Derivation des ewigen Worts in der Seele, diese simplificirt alles, was irgend materiell kan gedacht werden. Diese bringt Einheit in die Seele. Bey dieser Einheit aber kan wohl stehen nicht zwar eine grobe Zusammensetzung der Kräften, sondern eine Essentiation, d.i., daß die Kräften in fieri sich anfangs resistiren, aber hernach penetriren und endlich in einem rein actuirten geistlichen Element sich zusammen fassen. Da wird aus einem flüchtigen ein fixes, aus einem ausgebreiteten ein concentrirtes Wesen..." (Cf. *Öffentliches Denckmahl...: Von der Wunder-Kraft Gottes in den Wasser-Quellen*; eds. BREYMAYER and HÄUSSERMANN, p. 102 = p. 50 of the first edition 1763. Transl. by M. Vassányi.)

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, *Neue Metaphysische Erwegungen...*, § 10; p. 175 = pp. 223–224 in the first edition.

⁷⁸*Biblisches und Emblematisches Wörterbuch*, article "Cörper, Soma, chros"; ed. TSCHIŽEWSKIJ, p. 100. Cf. also: "Der neu wiedergebohrne Mensch liegt in dem alten, und hat himmlisch Fleisch und Blut in sich, und desselben Fleisches Geist ist kein fremder Geist, sondern sein eigener aus dem innern gebohren." (*Ibid.*, article "Essen das Fleisch des Menschen-Sohns und trinken sein Blut", p. 187.

material) plurality of its constitutive parts. Therefore, ÖTINGER'S categories of substance are flexible, or, better, dynamic. The doctrine of the transformability of substance is conceived, again, so as ontologically to make possible the gradual evolution and self-realization (then the eschatological return into itself) of original divine simplicity. This is achieved, among other things, by the argumentative use of the concepts of *corporificatio* and *essentiatio*.

As we are now closing here the analysis of the Ötingerian concept of God's spiritual and productive corporeality, three more remarks have to be made before we can start considering the related doctrine of spiritual space as God's 'organ of sense', which is the second aspect or constituent of ÖTINGER'S theory of God's cosmogonical-theogonical expansion. First, so far we have not distinguished (as far as this is possible at all) between ÖTINGER'S respective concepts of *spirit* and *soul* because this will be best done in Section 11, where we examine his problematic position on the *Weltseele*.

Second, let us make a short remark on a further application of the doctrine of God's spiritual corporeality by ÖTINGER. He transfers this speculative theological principle onto the ground of Biblical emblematics as well, where he applies it as a principle of exegesis: "*the corporeality of Scripture has been God's chief objective*" ("*die Sinnlichkeit der Schrift {ist} die Hauptabsicht Gottes.*"⁷⁹)

Third, it may be appropriate to point out here that one reason why Johann Georg HAMANN also can be termed a Cabalistic thinker is the emphasis he lays in his philosophical explanation of Creation on the corporeality of the universe, and in accordance with this on the human faculty of sense perception ("*Sinnlichkeit*"), much in the same manner as ÖTINGER does it (cf. HAMANN'S *Des Ritters von Rosencranz letzte Willensmeynung* and his *Aesthetica in nuce*).

9 *Spiritual Space as the Sensorium Dei. ÖTINGER'S REFERENCE TO NEWTON'S Optice (1706 Edition). NEWTON'S Denial That God Is the Soul of the World*

We said above (Section 8, *ad in.*) that the Ötingerian theory of God's cosmogonical expansion has two highly interrelated constituents or aspects. In fact, it may be even more appropriate to call them different aspects or facets of the same divine process: the generation of the spiritual and material universe. The second facet, which we are about to treat now, offers further philosophical determination of the movement of God toward (or, better, into) physical nature.

The discussion of the doctrine of *space as the sense organ of God* has to start from ÖTINGER'S Scriptural evidence for God's transition into the first spiritual expansion, which is an important and authoritative point of reference for his whole

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, ÖTINGER'S *Vorrede*, p.) (6 verso. The sign) (specifies the page numbers in the *Vorrede*; subordinate word order rearranged in the citation.

oeuvre. Namely, in Psalm 150, line 1, the psalmist launches the following appeal: “Praise him in the firmament of His power” (King James version); “*laudate eum in firmamento virtutis eius*” (*Vulgata*); “ἀνεῖτε αὐτὸν ἐν στερεώματι δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ” (*LXX*); חַדְוֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם הַקְּדוֹת “*hal°lühū bir°qia uzzō*”, *Tanach*). ÖTINGER here exploits the expression *r°qia uzzō* (*rqi* ‘*zw* in his consonantal transcription). In this, רָקִיָּה (*rāqia*, *firmamentum*) seems etymologically related to the root רִקַּ (r°q), which, in its derived forms, carries the fundamental meaning “to empty / pour out” (whence, perhaps, the Septuagint translation with a derivative of the verb στερεώω, “to deprive / bereave of sth.”). ÖTINGER’s grasp of Hebrew, therefore, allows him to interpret the authoritative text of Psalm 150:1 in the non-conventional, approximative sense of “praise God in His (hollow) space”. While the ecclesiastically authorized *Luthertext* has here the less philosophical interpretation, “*Lobet Ihn in der Feste seiner Macht*”,⁸⁰ ÖTINGER renders the line as “*Lobet ihn in dem ausgebreiteten Raum, expanso, seiner Stärke...*” Then he puts forward an elucidation in the following terms:

»‘z« means centre; *expansum* refers to the periphery. This periphery arises out of the sanctuary (or, alternatively, from holiness)... In this space, angels and human beings abide... This space is the true substance, in which the existence of all intellects and spirits is grounded; this is the intellectual extension whereby we see, think, live, move and are. This intellectual extension generates, by virtue of the seven spirits, whatever is spiritual and corporeal, from the very same ground. It is uncreated but puts on creature-like modes in order to be intimately united with the creature. On the one hand, it is born eternally out of God, on the other hand, it is born from humanity. This is why God and man have become one person, or one intelligence in one person. It is possessed of the sensories of the eyes, the ears, the nose and the taste eminently...⁸¹

This passage underpins our view that what ÖTINGER is about to develop here into the doctrine of spiritual space as the sense organ of God is actually another aspect or facet of the theory about the process of the cosmogonical expansion of God. In this movement, namely, a periphery or space (*Raum*) originates from the divine centre, the essence of God. The first philosophical determination of this space is that it is true spiritual substance, which is interpreted as an extension or dimension of intelligible substance (“*etendue intelligible*”). Second, as the first emanation of divine unicity

⁸⁰ *Editio ultimae manus* (1545), in the letter-perfect modern edition of VOLZ, p. 1092 = p. 329 in the original.

⁸¹ »‘z« ist centrum; *expansum* ist die Peripherie. Diese geht vom Heiligthum aus... In diesem Raum wohnen Engel und Menschen... Dieser Raum ist die wahre Substanz, worinn alle Intelligenzen und Geister ihr Bestehen haben, sie ist die *etendue intelligible*, durch welche wir sehen, denken, leben, uns bewegen und seyn. Sie generirt durch die sieben Geister das Geistliche und Leibliche, aus einem Grund. Sie ist ungeschaffen, nimmt aber creatürliche Art an sich, um sich innigst vereinigen zu können mit der Creatur. Sie ist aber gebohren eines Theils aus GOTT von Ewigkeit, andern Theils aus der Menschheit, darum ist GOTT und Mensch eine Person oder persönliche Intelligenz worden. Sie hat alle Sensoria der Augen, Ohren, Nase, Geschmacks eminenter in sich...” (*Offentliches Denckmahl... Schriftstellen von Geist, Herrlichkeit und Leben*, subsection “*Die Worte, die Jesus und seine Apostel vom Geist gebraucht, sind folgende:*”; eds. BREYMER and HÄUSSERMANN, pp. 193–194 = p. 264 of the first edition 1763. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

("centrum"), this intelligible space has a generating function. It produces, assisted by the seven secondary divine manifestations or *S^{phiroth}*, lower spiritual and corporeal, probably material, reality. The expression "*das Geistliche und Leibliche*" seems no pleonasm but a dichotomy, so the second term should refer to visible material reality. Third, the circumstance that this substance is a specific kind of space (the term *σπερέωμα* refers to solidity as well, i.e., to the presence of three dimensions in a holowness) allows ÖTINGER to say that finite spirits are located in it. In addition, this intellectual substance is the precondition and medium of perception for finite spirits. Fourth, this substance is vested with *per eminentiam* operating organs of perception ("*Sensoria*") and is identified in another passage with the *sensorium Dei*, which provides God Himself with perception in the material world. But, fifth, and perhaps most importantly, this spiritual substance must be the true likeness of God, *das wahre Ebenbild Gottes*: Christ, the prototypal man, the Word of God which unifies in itself the entire intellectual universe. Hence, the cosmogonical-theogonical process passes through the creative Logos of God, which is at once the *sensorium Dei* and God's spiritual body. This is the Christological aspect of ÖTINGER's theology. Christ is, through the instrumentality of the seven lower representations of God ("*durch die sieben Geister*"), the principle of generation of all further spiritual and – as it seems reasonable to suppose – material reality.

The term *sensorium Dei* is, in a first approach, a Newtonian expression. ÖTINGER draws on NEWTON as well for this theory, interpreting him in the following terms:

2. *God is present in, and by virtue of, the 'central forces.'*
3. *These expand themselves to form the infinite space (Ps. 151).*
4. *This space is the sensory of God; Ps. 151.*
5. *This space is void of matter but full of spirits (Ps. 151).*
6. *This space is the eternal freedom and a penetrable being.*
14. *Jacob Böhme calls Newtonian space the eternal element or the ternarium sanctum, in which God operates freely.*⁸²

⁸²"2. *GOtt ist gegenwärtig, in und durch die Central-Kräftten. 3. Diese breiten sich aus in den unendlichen Raum (Ps. 151). 4. Dieser Raum ist das Sensorium GOttes; Ps. 151. 5. Dieser Raum ist leer von Materie, aber voll Geistes (Ps. 151). 6. Dieser Raum ist die ewige Freyheit und ein ens penetrabile. ... 14. Neutons Raum nennt Jac. Boehm das ewige Element oder den Ternarium sanctum, darin GOtt frey wücket."* (*Öffentliches Denckmahl...: Summarien aus Oetingers Philosophen-Manuskript... II: Vergleichung der Neutonischen Philosophie mit der Cabbalistischen*; eds. BREYMAYER and HÄUSSERMANN, p. 146 = p. 157 in the first edition 1763. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) Again, this "comparison" is more like an interpretation of, and comment on, a number of Newtonian ideas, by ÖTINGER. The modern editors of the *Öffentliches Denckmahl* have identified the *Principia* and the *Optice* as ÖTINGER's sources of this interpretative summary. Yet, despite their extreme care in using source materials in general, they have used somewhat uncritically the second English edition of NEWTON's *Opticks* as the basis of their citations. As we are going to see, the second English edition (1717) of this work differs substantially from the first Latin (1706) in respect of philosophical content; and second, I am personally a little uncertain as to whether ÖTINGER could read English. Thirdly, the editors are unaware of the cancellation of the critical p. 315 too, which NEWTON inserted into most copies of the first Latin edition (of this, see *infra*).

In this passage, allegedly an interpretation of “Newtonian philosophy” as such, we can find practically all the essential elements of ÖTINGER's doctrine of the spiritual body of God, combined with the thesis of the same spiritual *corpus* being the sense organ of God. ÖTINGER, who gives no immediate bibliographical clue to his Newtonian reference, certainly draws on the first Latin 1706 edition of NEWTON's *Optice* (the *Opticks* translated into Latin by NEWTON's loyal disciple dr. Samuel CLARKE). Thus, a bypass seems necessary on NEWTON's relevant hypothesis concerning physical space as the *sensorium Dei* in that work of his.⁸³

Book Three of NEWTON's *Optice* consists of questions, i.e., hypotheses formulated in question form. As historical-philological research has pointed out, NEWTON added in Book Three of this work seven new *quaestiones* to the existing sixteen of the first English edition (1704). Of these, *quaestio* № 20 gained historical importance because towards the end of it, NEWTON proposed the following interrogatively formulated theological conclusion:

Annon Spatium Universum, Sensorium est Entis Incorporei, Viventis, & Intelligentis; quod res Ipsas cernat & complectatur intimas, totasque; penitus & in se praesentes perspiciat; quarum id quidem, quod in Nobis sentit & cogitat, Imagines tantum in Cerebro conuertur?⁸⁴

A. KOYRÉ and I. B. COHEN have described how NEWTON, having noticed that the outright identification of infinite physical space with a “*Sensorium*” of God might be too daring in terms of theology, had the page excised from the already printed but not yet bound sheets, and had a cancel substituted, in which the whole sentence structure was changed, and the philosophically significant word “*tanquam*” (“as it were”) was inserted before “*Sensorio*” (text of the second English edition, of 1717,

⁸³As we are discussing theories which philosophically relate the concept of God to that of physical space, it may be interesting to note that even before NEWTON published the first Latin version of his *Optice* (1706), the mathematician Joseph RAPHSON had already demonstrated real space to be an attribute of the infinite being, in his *De spatio reali, seu ente infinito conamen Mathematico-Metaphysicum* (London, 1702). Here in ch. V, proposition 13, he says “*Spatium est attributum (viz. immensitas) primae causae.*” He explains this in the *scholion* to the same thesis as follows: “*Cum nihil dat, quod non habet, neque causa esse potest perfectionis alicujus, quam in se aliquo modo non continet, gradu saltem aequali, si non majore; cumque nihil esse potest in rerum natura praeter extensa, & inextensa; cumque extensionem demonstravimus esse perfectionem, alicubi existentem, etiam infinitam, necessariam, aeternam, &c.; necessario sequetur, eam in Prima saltem extensorum Causa reperiri, sine qua extensa existere nequeant.*” (Pp. 79–80; see bibliography under RAPHSON.)

⁸⁴Cited from a photocopy of p. 315 of the original version of the 1706 *Optice*, published in KOYRÉ and COHEN, 1961, p. 564.

in which the corresponding query is № 28; see the original Latin text of 1706 in footnote):⁸⁵

*Does it not appear from phaenomena, that there is a Being incorporeal, living, intelligent, omnipresent, who, in infinite space, as it were in his sensory, sees the things themselves intimately, and throughly perceives them, and comprehends them wholly by their immediate presence to himself: of which things the images only, carried through the organs of sense into our little sensoriums, are there seen and beheld by that which in us perceives and thinks.*⁸⁶

However, later in the same Book, at the end of Query 23, NEWTON returns to the same topic, in the same 1706 edition of the *Optice*. Here he formulates a physico-theological theory of the creation and arrangement of matter by the “*Intelligentiae & Sapientiae Entis Potentis semperque Viventis*”. No cancellation was inserted in this passage where NEWTON explains that this Being:

...quod sit ubique scilicet praesens, possitque Voluntate sua corpora omnia in infinito suo Sensorio movere, adeoque cunctas universi partes ad arbitrium suum fingere & refingere, multo magis quam anima nostra, quae est in Nobis Imago Dei, voluntate sua ad corporis nostri membra movenda valet.⁸⁷

This remained uncorrected even in the second English edition of 1717, which, in a first approach, would seem to imply that NEWTON was reluctant essentially to modify his position:

...〈this powerful, ever-living Agent,〉 *being in all places, is more able by his will to move the bodies within his boundless uniform sensorium, and thereby to form and reform the parts of the universe, than we are by our will to move the parts of our own bodies.*⁸⁸

Our first impression about NEWTON'S position is modified, however, by the entire, newly created paragraph that he inserted into the same (second English) edition,

⁸⁵KOYRÉ and COHEN, 1961, *passim*. These authors communicate their discovery of NEWTON'S manoeuvre with the following words: “A close examination of a number of different examples of the 1706 *Optice* proves beyond doubt that... at some time after the completion of the printing (but before the binding of the volume) Newton and Clarke (the translator into Latin) ...decided to delete this (text) and to replace it by another in which the formal identification of space with the *Sensorium Dei* would be weakened by the introduction of the word *tanquam*. Accordingly, the page in question was cut out and another was substituted for it. Thus in almost all examples page 315 can readily be seen to be a cancel.” (*Ibid.*, p. 566.) See further GJERTSEN, article *Opticks*, p. 413; and I. B. COHEN: “The Case of the Missing Author: The Title Page of Newton's *Opticks* (1704), with Notes on the Title Page of Huygens' *Traité de la lumière*”, in eds. BUCHWALD and COHEN, p. 29.

⁸⁶English text from ed. HORSLEY, vol. IV, p. 238, highlighting added. The 1706 Latin text reads as follows: “...*Annon ex phaenomenis constat, esse Entem Incorporeum, Viventem, Intelligentem, Omnipraesentem, qui in Spatio infinito, tanquam Sensorio suo, res ipsas intime cernat, penitusque perspiciat, totasque intra se praesens praesentes complectatur; quarum quidem rerum Id quod in nobis sentit et cogitat, Imagines tantum ad se per Organa Sensuum delatas, in Sensoriolo suo percipit et contuetur?*” (In NEWTON 1706, p. 315.)

⁸⁷In NEWTON 1706, p. 346.

⁸⁸In the second English edition, of 1717, the corresponding query is № 31; ed. HORSLEY, vol. IV, p. 262.

right after the previous passage, under the marginal note “*God not the soul of the world*”:

And yet we are not to consider the world as the body of God, or the several parts thereof as the parts of God. He is an uniform Being, void of organs, members or parts; and they (scil. the parts of the universe) are his creatures subordinate to him, and subservient to his will; and he is no more the soul of them, than the soul of a man is the soul of the species of things carried through the organs of sense into the place of its sensation, where it perceives them by means of its immediate presence, without the intervention of any third thing. The organs of sense are not for enabling the soul to perceive the species of things in its sensorium, but only for conveying them thither; and God has no need of such organs, he being every where present to the things themselves.⁸⁹

What is, then, the problematic philosophical theological content of the Newtonian conception of the *sensorium Dei*? The question is weighty since LEIBNIZ, in November 1715, started the famous philosophical debate by correspondence with S. CLARKE, NEWTON's translator and representative in the affair, partly around the problem of what this expression meant. For LEIBNIZ, it meant ‘sense organ’ (“*an Organ, which God makes use of to perceive Things by*”),⁹⁰ and to his mind, this raised grave theological problems: “*if God stands in need of any Organ, to perceive Things by, it will follow, that they do not depend altogether upon him, nor were produced by him.*”⁹¹ To increase the interest of the matter, we cite the suggestion of KOYRÉ and COHEN: “*Can we not... assume that it was the earlier discarded text (of Query 20, page 315) that expressed Newton's real conviction?*”⁹²

⁸⁹In ed. HORSLEY, vol. IV, pp. 262–263.

⁹⁰“*l'Organe, dont Dieu se sert pour sentir les choses...*” (LEIBNIZ's first letter to NEWTON in this debate, November 1715. CLARKE's own translation, in CLARKE p. 2, original highlighting.)

⁹¹“*s'il (scil. Dieu) a besoin de quelque Moyen pour les sentir, elles ne dependent donc entierement de luy, & ne sont point sa production.*” (In the main text above, CLARKE's own translation, in CLARKE p. 2, original highlighting. Cf. KOYRÉ and COHEN, 1961, pp. 561–562.) The LEIBNIZ-CLARKE correspondence was published in a bilingual (French-English) edition by CLARKE a year after the death of LEIBNIZ, under the following title: *A Collection of Papers, Which passed between the late Learned Mr. Leibnitz, and Dr. Clarke, In the Years 1715 and 1716. Relating to the Principles of Natural Philosophy and Religion* etc. London, 1717 (for more details, see bibliography, under CLARKE). In this *editio princeps* of the debate, LEIBNIZ's interpretation of the Newtonian doctrine is extracted from LEIBNIZ's November 1715 letter as follows: “*1. Il semble que la Religion Naturelle même s'affoiblit extrêmement. Plusieurs font les Ames corporelles; d'autres font Dieu luy-même corporel. 2. M. Locke, & ses Sectateurs, doutent au moins, si les Ames ne sont Materielles, & naturellement perissables. 3. M. Newton dit que l'Espace est l'Organe, dont Dieu se sert pour sentir les choses. Mais s'il a besoin de quelque Moyen pour les sentir, elles ne dependent donc entierement de luy, & ne sont point sa production. 4. M. Newton, & ses Sectateurs, ont encore une fort plaisante Opinion de l'ouvrage de Dieu. Selon eux Dieu a besoin de remonter de temps en temps sa Montre: Autrement elle cesseroit d'agir.* etc.” (CLARKE, p. 2; highlighting in the original.)

⁹²KOYRÉ and COHEN, 1961, p. 566. This article is an essentially *historical* presentation of the CLARKE-LEIBNIZ debate and of the case of the missing *tanquam*: it actually *ends* with the suggestion we cite above.

But what does NEWTON precisely say in that first, discarded version of his statement? Some care must be taken already in respect of its modality for it is not properly called a statement in that it is qualified by NEWTON as a “*quaestio*” or query (problem). While this is certainly true, we have to call into mind that there is a specific type of query in the classical tradition of philosophy, namely, the Aristotelian *πρόβλημα* (problem). This kind of (mostly natural) scientific investigation, exemplified in the Aristotelian corpus by the *Problemata physica*, usually starts with two questions of the type *Why is it that...? Is it not because...?* These questions introduce a quick, but decisive application of doctrines elaborated elsewhere in the corpus (in texts like, e.g., *De historia animalium*, etc.). In the resolution of the problems, the inductions or deductions are generally not full, and the solutions of the several problems are not organized into a system (in the *Problemata* themselves). In short, the Aristotelian “query” is a statement based on not fully developed but developable evidence, proposed in the form of a question for more detailed scholarly discussion, but nonetheless carrying a very high degree of scientific certainty. This seems to be the case with the Newtonian queries as well.

In terms of philosophical theological content, then, the first question is what, precisely, we are to understand by the word *sensorium* in NEWTON'S text? Well, it becomes clear from the analogy with the mechanism of human perception that, for NEWTON, *sensorium* is that part of the human soul into which the external sense organs (the ears and eyes, etc.) forward the images (the Lockean *ideas*) of exterior material objects: approximately, the *sensus communis*. In other words *sensorium* is not an external sense organ (*organum sensus*) for NEWTON, although the word was used in this sense also at the time, as LEIBNIZ did not fail to point out. This part of the soul is conceived as a (spiritual) place, as the Lockean interior chamber of the soul. Inside it, the thinking and perceiving part of the soul, the mind, is present, beholding and judging the received *ideas* with immediate intellectual contemplation.

By virtue of the analogy of human spirit with divine spirit, this concept of the human *sensorium* was applied (first without qualification, then in an *as if* modality) by NEWTON to God: *as* the human mind perceives the *ideas* of things received in the interior chamber of the soul, *so* the divine mind perceives the things themselves encompassed by its *sensorium*. This analogy is set up by virtue of an *a fortiori* reasoning: if the human mind is capable of beholding the *images only* of material things in its *sensorium*, then God, by reason of His infinite intellect and power, should be thought to be able to perceive the things *themselves*.

But this analogy implies the identification of physical space with the *sensorium Dei*, a divine spiritual place. In this respect, it does not matter any more whether this *sensorium* is a sense organ or a place of internal perception; what matters is that it is part of God. That the physical world is really placed in the spirit of God is suggested by NEWTON'S own wording, whereby the celestial bodies are said to be *in* God (“*in se praesentes*”, “*intra se... praesentes*”). This metaphysical arrangement displays certain resemblances with PLATO'S doctrine on the universal soul. In 36 d 9-e 1 of the *Timaios*, we are told that the demiurge put the material world together

within the universal soul (“... πᾶν τὸ σωματοειδὲς ἐντὸς αὐτῆς ἐτεκταίνεται”);⁹³ and, a couple of lines further in 36 e 3, that the universal soul covers the universe *from outside* (“αὐτὸν ἔξωθεν περικαλύψασα”). This classical parallel would seem to lead us to the preliminary conclusion that the Newtonian concept of *sensorium Dei* entails a specific version of a theory of God being the soul of the world.

Next, the additions of the second English edition 1717, which came out after the death of LEIBNIZ, reveal that NEWTON was not ready to turn back on the road. He maintains that while God does not have organs of sense, He does have a *sensorium*, which *is* the space of the physical universe. At the same time, however, NEWTON rejects the identification of God with the universal soul, on the ground that God can not be the soul of the finite individual things, and he emphasizes that everything material is in a relation of hypotaxis (subordination) to God. All this seems to bring us to the final conclusion that the Newtonian doctrine on the *sensorium Dei* was formed as an unconventional interpretation of the *omnipresence* and *omniscience* of God, but it did have an explicit tendency towards a Platonically tinged concept of God, which would have presented God as a soul *dominating* the cosmos (ψυχὴ σώματος δεσπότις, *Timaios* 34 c 5), instead of entertaining a *commercium*-relationship with it. However, the hard theological consequences of such a thesis were certainly unacceptable to NEWTON who, let us remember, formulated the theory of the *sensorium Dei* not in the modality of a strict asseveration but as material for further discussion.

This general interpretation is supported by the often-cited text of the General Scholium of Part III of NEWTON's *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* (third edition, 1726). Here, again, the author denies that God can be conceived as the soul of the world⁹⁴ but insists on that there is an essential connection between the generation of space and the omnipresence of God.⁹⁵ By virtue of this strong interpretation of the divine omnipresence, he even asserts that ‘all worlds are contained and moved in God.’⁹⁶ Despite this, the divine substance as such is ultimately unknowable for human reason, which can only come to know God's properties and attributes.⁹⁷ Apparently, NEWTON considered space (at least hypothetically) to be one of these attributes.

⁹³Citations from PLATO are from BURNET ed.

⁹⁴“*Hic (scil. God) omnia regit non ut anima mundi, sed ut universorum dominus.*” (KOYRÉ and COHEN, eds., 1972, vol. II, p. 760.)

⁹⁵“*Durat semper, & adest ubique, & existendo semper & ubique, durationem & spatium constituit.*” (KOYRÉ and COHEN, eds., 1972, vol. II, p. 761.)

⁹⁶“*Omnipraesens est non per virtutem solam, sed etiam per substantiam... In ipso continentur & moventur universa, sed sine mutua passione. Deus nihil patitur ex corporum motibus: illa nullam sentiunt resistentiam ex omnipraesentia dei. Deum summum necessario existere in confesso est: Et eadem necessitate semper est & ubique.*” (KOYRÉ and COHEN, eds., 1972, vol. II, p. 762.)

⁹⁷“*...intimas substantias nullo sensu, nulla actione reflexa cognoscimus; & multo minus ideam habemus substantiae dei. Hunc cognoscimus solummodo per proprietates ejus & attributa...*” (KOYRÉ and COHEN, eds., 1972, vol. II, p. 763.)

Returning now to the mystically inclined ÖTINGER, it seems reasonable to propose that he might have been among the scholars who saw a copy of the first Latin edition of the *Optice* without the cancel (for there survived such copies),⁹⁸ or who did not care about the *tanquam* of Query 20, which was missing from Query 23 anyhow. Visibly, he preferred the interpretation that God has a *sensorium* in a non-metaphorical sense, while he ignored the addition NEWTON made in the second English edition. But in the subsection of the *Offentliches Denckmahl* entitled, “*Comparison of the Newtonian Philosophy with the Cabbalistic Philosophy*” (“*Vergleichung der Neutonischen Philosophie mit der Cabbalistischen*”), ÖTINGER seems to essentially transform the Newtonian doctrine that originally concerned God's perception in *physical* space into a theory of *spiritual* space being God's sense organ. However, divine spiritual space, the productive Logos or *mundus intelligibilis*, is, at the same time, the principle of generation of the entire physical reality and, so, also of physical space: “*God in Himself is without any space but in the revelation of His concealment, He Himself is the space of all things.*”⁹⁹ This is, then, a very good point for us to cross over into the discussion of ÖTINGER's fragmentary cosmogony.

10 ÖTINGER'S Fragmentary Cosmogony, and His Idea of God's Influxus ‘Spirituo-Corporalis’ on the Physical World. God's Quasi-Physical Presence

So far, we have been discussing the two interrelated facets of ÖTINGER's speculative theory of the cosmogonical expansion of God. We have seen that these two facets were: 1) the doctrine of God's spiritual corporeality (Section 8), and, 2) the doctrine of spiritual space conceived as the *sensorium Dei* (Section 9). We have also considered: 1) ÖTINGER's complementary ideas about the attributes of God's spiritual body, vivification and penetrability, as well as 2) the historical derivation, from Newtonian optics, of his concept of *sensorium Dei*. While examining the attributes of the divine *corpus spirituale*, which is also the productive Word of God, the Christ, we also treated ÖTINGER's related theories on the mutual transformability of spirit and matter (*corporificatio* and *essentiatio*, Section 8). It seems that with this, we now have all the premisses in the hand that are necessary to give a presentation and a philosophical analysis of how he, if fragmentarily, modelled the coming-to-be of the physical universe—in short, his cosmogony.

⁹⁸See KOYRÉ and COHEN, 1961, p. 566.

⁹⁹“*Gott in sich selbst ist ohne Raum, aber in der Offenbarung seiner Verborgenheit ist Er selbst der Raum aller Dinge (Ps. 90, 1).*” (*Offentliches Denckmahl...: Von der Wunder-Kraft GÖttes in den Wasser-Quellen*; eds. BREYMER and HÄUSSERMANN, p. 102 = p. 51 in the first edition of 1763. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

The fragmentariness of this cosmogony may be due to external (dogmatic or even ecclesiastic) factors. We suggested above (Section 7, *ad fin.*) that ÖTINGER, more or less, consciously refrained from the positive determination of the *material* cause of the world. To occupy an unambiguously Cabbalistic position with regard to that question might have been incompatible with his quality as an ordained and active Lutheran pastor. But it is also possible that the fragmentariness of his cosmogonical ideas resulted from the hermeneutical character of his book, which had originally been conceived as a philosophical-theological commentary of the central painting on the altar of the *Dreifaltigkeitskirche* in Bad Teinach. That painting represents the system of the ten *Sephiroth*, first and foremost, as a theological-trinitological system, for this is evidently the aspect that should appear on an altar in a Christian church. It is a painting that naturally lacks an explicit natural philosophical aspect or relevance. Finally, an explicit systematic transition from the concept of God to the concept of Nature is seldom made in the classical Cabbalistic sources, which almost invariably concentrate on the emergence, by emanation, of the first spiritual realities from the transcendent essence of the Godhead. As a result of all these factors, we can hardly find positive cosmogonical statements in ÖTINGER's philosophy as it is expounded in the *Offentliches Denckmahl*.

As we anticipated to some extent under the preceding points, the fundamental thesis of ÖTINGER's speculative cosmogony is that the physical universe comes-to-be, by a series of transformations of essence, from God's spiritual body: the productive divine Logos, which holds the entire intelligible universe in itself and, in turn, derives from the hidden divine essence, God as *Ungrund*. Consequently, ÖTINGER, in the wake of BÖHME, reinterprets the dogma of *creatio ex nihilo* (cf. Section 7 in general):

32. *What is the world made of? Answer: Not out of nothing. By virtue of the eternal will, the (eternal) nature came to be, and from this, the 'point', a combination of light and obscurity. From the obscurity, the Earth emerged, from the light, Heaven.*¹⁰⁰

First, we may recognize some essential elements of BÖHME's Cabbalistic metaphysics, like the original generation of the physical world from divine desire or will (*Wille*), which brings about, first, the apparition of the intellectual universe. From the *mundus intelligibilis* (the (ewige) *Natur*), the generative principles of darkness and light appear, ultimately to produce the earth and the skies (we shall see this below in more detail). Second, regarding theological content, the concept of 'creation' is

¹⁰⁰32. *Aus was die Welt gemacht sey? R(esponsio): Nicht aus Nichts. Durch den ewigen Willen wurde die (ewige) Natur, und aus der Natur das Punctum ein Licht und Finsterniß, aus Finsterniß wurde Erde, aus Licht Himmel."* (*Offentliches Denckmahl...: (Summarien aus Oetingers Philosophen-Manuskript...)* / V : Detlev Cluvers System, Vergleichung mit Jacob Böhmens Cabbala; eds. BREYMAYER and HÄUSSERMANN, p. 153 = p. 172 of the first edition of 1763. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.). The terms *Punctum*, *Licht* and *Finsterniß* probably refer to the emanationist theological scheme of the *Zohar* as expounded in its first part, the *B'reshith*. According to that scheme, the absolutely transcendent divine essence first manifested itself in a spiritual 'point' (here *Punctum*), which spread a brilliancy (here *Licht*) so *blinding* that it appeared to be intelligible *darkness* (here *Finsterniß*). On the Zoharic scheme of the gradual self-unfolding of the divine essence, see further Section 14 of Chapter 7.

replaced by the coming-to-be of the world 'through' or 'because of' God (a dogmatically cautious formula). As we learn subsequently, this generation of the world is also the eternal birth of God into manifest reality ("*die ewige Geburt GOTTes aus dem verborgensten der Gottheit ins offenbare*").¹⁰¹

But ÖTINGER is sometimes a bit less cautious. In some passages, he advances the outright Cabbalistic thesis that a finite 'creature' (and so 'creation' in general) comes to be *from* God, "*aus GOTT*". In this case, God is not simply the (extramundane) efficient cause of the world, but even its material cause. This would result in the consubstantiality of the world with God, and could imply the intramundaneity of God. The modality of ÖTINGER's proposition is, however, not syllogistical or positively scientific here. He prefers to transfer the whole discussion to the domain of religious belief:

2. That the creature is from God, but that it is dissoluble or has a dissoluble principle in so far as it is not only a finite being but also a being convertible into something evil precisely by reason of its dissolubility, and that hence, it is made of obscurity and light, and that the origin of evil is to be found in this circumstance,

...

*all this can not be explored by means of sensation nor by experience but, according to John 3:11, can be admitted in faith only.*¹⁰²

Here, the dogmatically critical thesis that 'created' finite beings come *from* (and no longer *from the direction of*) God is toned down and proposed by ÖTINGER as a non-demonstratable truth of faith. As regards the philosophical content of the passage, the absolute difference between God-in-Himself and the product of His glorious epiphany, the world, says ÖTINGER, is that God is indissoluble (*ἀκατάλυτος*), while a finite being may be decomposed into its constitutive parts, which is somehow also the cause of sin (cf. the related doctrine of SCHELLING's *Freiheitsschrift*). The two generative principles and material constituents of finite reality are, again, darkness and light, both of which are specific stages in the scheme of the self-unfolding movement of God. Thus, in fact, obscurity and light appear as both metaphysical and physical principles.

We meet them again in ÖTINGER's interpretation of EZECHIEL's visions (Ez., *capp.* I & X). This time we can draw a more detailed diagram representing his

¹⁰¹ *Öffentliches Denkmahl...: Neue Metaphysische Erwegungen über das Cabbalistiche System...*; eds. BREYMAYER and HÄUSSERMANN, p. 170 = p. 210 of the first edition of 1763.

¹⁰² "2. Daß die Creatur aus GOTT seye, aber dissolubel oder dissoluble Grund-Anfänge habe, weil sie nicht nur ein Finitum, sondern ein transmutabile in malum propter ipsam dissolubilitatem seye und also aus Finsterniß und Licht bestehen müsse, und daß Origo Mali darinn zu suchen, ... das alles wird weder durch Empfindung noch Erfahrung erforscht, sondern nach Joh. 3, 11 allein im Glauben kindlich angenommen." (*Öffentliches Denkmahl...: Von Licht und Finsterniß, III. Schlußrede, Weitere Ausführung des Grund-Begriffs vom Saltz*; eds. BREYMAYER and HÄUSSERMANN, pp. 243–244 = p. 386 of the first edition of 1763. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting added.)

reconstruction of creative divine evolution. In this scheme, the successive stages of the self-manifesting movement (*Auswicklung*) of God are arranged from left to right:¹⁰³

<i>Finsterniß</i> (Ungrund)	<i>Feuer, which</i> <i>in der Mitte</i> (Centrum) <i>sich</i> <i>concentriret</i>	<i>Licht</i>	<i>4 lebendige Gestalten,</i> i.e., <i>himmlische</i> <i>Intelligenzen, in</i> each of which there is <i>die Form eines</i> <i>Menschen primas</i> (Adam Kadmon)	<i>drehendes</i> <i>Rad, and</i> <i>Blitz in</i> <i>Form</i> <i>eines</i> <i>Creutztes</i>	<i>Ausbreitung,</i> & <i>die</i> <i>Gestalt</i> <i>eines</i> <i>Menschen</i>
(obscurity)	(fire)	(light)	(the four living forms with the figure of the primordial man)	(turning wheel, lightning)	(expansion, human figure)

Our first remark is that this description is full of Böhman reminiscences in terminology (*Finsterniß, Licht, Rad*). In theological-Christological terms, *Finsterniß* at the left side of the scheme is the hidden innermost part of God-in-Himself, *das Verborgenste der Gottheit*. A 'concentration' of essence in the infinite depths ('centre') of God leads to the profusion of a ray of light (in accord with the Neoplatonic metaphysical principle *bonum est effusivum sui*). In this light, which recalls *Genesis* I:3, celestial intelligences arise containing the image of prototypal man (*Mensch primas*), the *Adam Kadmon* of Cabbala, who is, as a rule, identified with the Christ in Christian Cabbalistic texts. This Christological reference is reinforced by the image of a thunderbolt striking in the form of a *cross*. The 'extension' (*Ausbreitung*) appearing above the turning wheel probably denotes the appearance of God's spiritual body: the spiritual space which is the *sensorium Dei*, and which, at the same

¹⁰³ *Öffentliches Denckmahl...: Lehre des Propheten Ezechiels von den Seelen und Intelligenzen, nur in Summarien*; eds. BREYMEYER and HÄUSSERMANN, p. 168 = pp. 206–208 of the first edition of 1763. The passage is too long to be cited. Nevertheless, a parallel passage on the Cabbalistic interpretation of EZECHIEL *cap. I*, in the chapter (*Realparallelen vom Geist*), is worth citing, for it treats the same subject in a shorter form: "*Leben, Herrlichkeit und Geist gehören zusammen; man lese, was ich über Ezech., C. 1 und 10 geschrieben. Offenbahr ist da die Herrlichkeit GOTTes beschrieben. Das Licht der Herrlichkeit muste allda aus der Finsterniß hervorbrechen. (Cap. I, v. 4 (of Ezechiel)). Und diß Licht muste sich im Circul drehen, biß es ein concentrirtes in sich selbst lauffendes Feuer worden, weil es in der Mitte, im Centro, wie Licht helle oder wie ein Blitz oder glüend Ertz geschimmert. Also gehört zur Herrlichkeit Finsterniß, und aus dieser, als einem Ungrund, muß Licht hervor brechen, nach 2. Cor. 4,6. Diß Licht muß aus dem Umfang in die Mitte lauffen und daraus wieder als ein Blitz aus einander gehen und wieder in die Rundung zusammen lauffen und also eine ewige Bewegung machen, wie die vier Thiere eine solche ewige Circular-Bewegung in sich selber hatten. Finsterniß wird hernach vom Licht verschlungen, Licht breitet sich aus und wird durch die Circular-Bewegung Feuer. Alles diß ist in der Herrlichkeit begriffen. Siehe, diß ist der gantze Grund Jac. Böhmens. Daß aber diß nicht nur auf materialische Dinge, sondern auch auf Geister gehe, siehest du in der H. Schrift hin und her.*" (*Ibid.*, p. 202 = pp. 284–285 of the first edition of 1763; roman characters by ÖTINGER.)

time, holds the *mundus intelligibilis*, i.e., the ideas or essences of all things to become, as we have seen. “*Die Gestalt eines Menschen*” emerging in the extension of divine simplicity might be such a productive intellectual form or idea, that of man. With this, the primordial generative movement of God leads us up to the point where material nature is about to begin.

We saw above in Section 8 how spiritual substance may cross over into material substance (cf. the metaphysical principle of *corporificatio*). Applying that theory, we shall see now, a bit more concretely, how pure spiritual space (*expansum*, *Ausbreitung*) brings forth physical space. In the significant chapter *⟨Realparallelen vom Geist⟩*, ÖTINGER elaborates on the representative epiphany (glory, *Sh^echinā* or *Herrlichkeit*) of God in the following, at first sight logically topsy-turvy manner:

The glory of God is not God Himself but the light in which He abides... and which is called Rakia usso, i.e., »the expansion of His power«..., in which the overpowering forces, i.e., the Gebhurot, and the 'emissions' of the Father of Lights are understood to be. These forces descend from and return into this expansion..., it is from this Rackia that God calls into existence whatever is, as yet, nothing... It is in this expansion that the overpowering forces, the lights and the emanations are... It is passive and puts on all forms which are given to it by the active principle, i.e., the eternal Word, by means of the 'central forces'. These are the origin of circular motion... This Rakia usso, then, brought forth the created Rackia..., which is the last of the thinkable things, like, in turn, the first thinkable and generative thing of God is the Word and its Rakia usso.¹⁰⁴

This passage starts with an explanation of the concept of the ‘extension’ of divine glory, *Herrlichkeit*, *Sh^echinā*. This is identified with the *Rakia üsso*, רַקִּיָּא וְסוֹ, “extension of His power”, Ps. 150:1, which is described as the spiritual space in which God pronounced the creative Word. This *expansum*, the first *S^ephirā* or *Abglanz* of God, as we may remember, is the space from which the rest of the *S^ephiroth* (emanations, *Ausgänge*) of God will flow forth. Above we saw how ÖTINGER characterized this space as flexible, *nachgiebig*. He affirms here that this spiritual substance “receives all (intelligible) forms” by virtue of the λόγος, Christ, the active principle and medium of ‘creation’. The power of Christ is exerted through the “central forces”, i.e., probably through the power of divine essence as it is in itself. This could be interpreted as an affirmation of the essential identity of Father and Son within the Trinity. Next, the divine spiritual body “brought forth”, through the

¹⁰⁴“*Die Herrlichkeit Gottes ist nicht GOTT selbst, sondern das Licht, darinnen er wohnt (Ps. 104, 2; I Tim. 6, 16), und wird genennet Rakia üsso, »die Ausdehnung seiner Stärke« (Ps. 150, 1), in welcher die Überwindungs-Kräften, Gebhurot, und die Ausgänge des Vaters der Lichter verstanden werden (Ps. 150, 2; Mich. 5, 2; Jc. 1, 17), als von welchen sie herab steigen und wohin sie wieder zurück gehen (Eccles. 12, 7), aus dieser Rackia rufft GOTT hervor, das da nichts ist, daß es seye (Röm. 4, 17). In diesem Expanso sind die Überwindungs-Kräfte, die Lichter, die Ausgänge... Dieses expansum ist passiv und nimmet alle Gestalten an, die ihm das activum, nemlich das ewige Wort, durch die Central-Kräften gibt, welche der Ursprung sind der Circular-Bewegung... Dieses Rakia üsso hat hernach auch nach sich das geschaffene Rackia Gen. I hervor gebracht, welches das ultimum cogitabile ist, wie das Wort und sein Rakia üsso das primum cogitabile generativum DEI ist.*” (*Öffentliches Denckmahl...: Schriftstellen von Geist, Herrlichkeit und Leben, ⟨Realparallelen vom Geist⟩*; eds. BREYMAYER and HÄUSSERMANN, p. 205 = pp. 293–294 of the original edition of 1763. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting by ÖTINGER.)

agency of the Word, 'created' ("geschaffen") extension, i.e., physical space, which is the condition of sense perception. The *ultimum cogitabile* must be the thing that is the lowest-ranking among the intelligible realities on the ontological scale, adjacent to material reality. Hence, it should be the *condition* of our perception of the objects of sensation, that is, space. Thus, the *primum cogitabile generativum DEI*, the productive *mundus intelligibilis*, which comes directly after the supraessential 'centrum' of God on the ontological scale, originates the 'last of the thinkables', namely, physical space. In this manner, intelligible nature ultimately brings forth the precondition of physical nature, of the *mundus sensibilis*.

In the next stage of emanation, only fragmentarily described by ÖTINGER, divine glory and force, put together, give material consistency to the physical world ("δόξα und κρᾶτος werden zusammen gesetzt, um das Physicum zu erhärten").¹⁰⁵ We do not learn in great detail how this happens, but it is clear that the main active principles in ÖTINGER's cosmogony are still the (lower) *S^cphirā*, the representative emanations of God. At least two passages give a slight idea of the general lines on which our author imagined the coming-to-be of the physical universe from God's glorious epiphany:

From this doctrine, we learn that the ancient Jews attributed the origin of several different things to what MAUPERTUIS¹⁰⁶ named the simplest natures of lights, i.e., the Sefirot. The

¹⁰⁵ *Öffentliches Denckmahl...: Schriftstellen von Geist, Herrlichkeit und Leben, Realparallelen vom Geist* (all editorial titles); eds. BREYMAYER and HÄUSSERMANN, p. 215 = p. 320 of the original edition of 1763.

¹⁰⁶ It has so far been impossible for us to find the notion of "einfachste Naturen der Lichten", or anything resembling it, in some of MAUPERTUIS's most important (philosophical and natural scientific) works. At least, no such concept appears in the *Réflexions philosophiques sur l'origine des langues, et la signification des mots* (1748), to which ÖTINGER himself refers in the *Öffentliches Denckmahl* (eds. BREYMAYER and HÄUSSERMANN, p. 252 = p. 406 of the first edition of 1763). Neither in the famous *Essai de cosmologie* (1750), nor in the controversial *Système de la nature* (first published in Latin 1751 as *Dissertatio inauguralis metaphysica de universali naturae systemate* and also known under the title *Essai sur la formation des corps organisés*). Nor in the *Relation d'un voyage au fond de la Lapponie pour trouver un ancien Monument*, to which ÖTINGER also refers in the above-mentioned page. As BREYMAYER points out (*Öffentliches Denckmahl*, eds. BREYMAYER and HÄUSSERMANN, Teil 2: *Anmerkungen*, p. 531) it was actually KANT who coined, and applied in connection with MAUPERTUIS, the expression "einfachste Naturen" in *Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund...: "Er [scil. MAUPERTUIS] glaubte mit Recht, daß ein so allgemeiner Zusammenhang, in den einfachsten Naturen der Dinge, einen weit tauglichem Grund an die Hand gebe, irgend in einem vollkommenen Urwesen die letzte Ursach von allem in der Welt mit Gewißheit anzutreffen, als alle Wahrnehmung verschiedener zufälligen und veränderlichen Anordnung nach besondern Gesetzen."* (AK, *Abth. I, Bd. II*, p. 64.) BREYMAYER further proves that ÖTINGER met this Kantian statement in a dissertation of PLOUCQUET's (*Observationes ad commentationem dni. Immanuelis Kant*, Tübingen, 1763), where it was cited. As we have seen in Section 2 of Chapter 4, then, KANT in *Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund...* discusses MAUPERTUIS's principle of least action, *principe de la moindre action*, as a physico-theological proof for the existence of God (cf. MAUPERTUIS's *Essai de cosmologie*; see Section 2 of Chapter 4). Thus in historical terms, the Kantian expression "einfachste Naturen" probably does not have any origin in MAUPERTUIS, neither does it have any serious methodological relevance in MAUPERTUIS's own exposition of the principle of least action in the *Essai de cosmologie, II^e partie*. Hence, this manifold *quidproquo* remains an example of ÖTINGER's philologically often deplorable use of his sources.

*'simplest natures of lights' are invariably restrained by their specific counterpart and this counterpart plays a limitative role on them when they are outside God. In God, they are all one within the Trinity but as the Trinity unfolds itself (lit. descends), they become seven in number.*¹⁰⁷

Our first remark is of historical interest. As we point out in a footnote in the citation, the expression "*einfachesten Naturen der Lichten*" probably cannot be attributed, in any scientifically serious manner, to MAUPERTUIS. The rest of the citation, however, proves the coherence of ÖTINGER's natural scientific thought in that it propounds the same doctrine about the cosmologically constitutive function of light as the several statements to this effect, which we have cited so far. Light is the essential, metaphysical as well as physical, constituent of glorious divine epiphany. This is significant for us also from a historical point of view. Light will have the same fundamental cosmological function in BAADER's and SCHELLING's respective theories concerning the world soul, as we are to see in Part IV. For ÖTINGER, the light emanating from hidden divine essence flows out in the several gradations of the *S^ephiroth*. In the essence of God, all emanations constitute a single whole, in the essential unity of the Trinity. It is in the course of the cosmogonical outflow, only, that immeasurable divine essence is somehow measured or specified according to grade and number. This *specificatio* takes place as the several different grades of the manifestative emanations are opposed, in a philosophically undetermined manner, to an opposite (a counterpart) which sets them in concrete, and removes them more and more from primordial, generative infinity. This is, then, the "*Ursprung verschiedener Dinge*", the origin of the, ultimately, even material concretion of the outpourings of God, proposed in a theory that tries to combine Trinitology with Cabbala. We encounter the same idea of the generative delimitation (*corporificatio* or *specificatio*) of divine power in another passage as well where ÖTINGER seems explicitly to discuss the coming-to-be of physical reality:

*God's spirit is one single spirit but it puts on limitations by virtue of the number seven, whereby it is possible easily to conclude from all flowers, herbs, stones and animals that a general single Spirit of Nature comes out of the sanctuary of Heaven, fills up the space of Heaven... and becomes corporeal and individual in seven forces, and then, by virtue of further combinations..., in an infinite number of mixed things.*¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ "Aus dieser Lehre erkennt man, daß die alte Ebräer den Ursprung verschiedener Dinge denen von Maupertuis so benannten einfachesten Naturen der Lichten oder Sephiroth zugeschrieben. Die einfachesten Naturen der Lichten seynd allezeit mit einem Gegentheil eingeschrenckt, und diß Gegentheil macht ihre Limitation aus, wann sie ausser GOTT seyn. In GOTT selbst sind sie zwar alle eins in der Dreyheit, aber im Herabsteigen der Dreyheit sind sie sieben." (*Öffentliches Denckmahl...: Erklärung der Lehrtafel der Prinzessin Antonia*); eds. BREYMAYER and HÄUSSERMANN, p. 254 = p. 411 of the original edition of 1763. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

¹⁰⁸ "Der Geist GOTTes ist ein einiger Geist, er specificirt sich aber durch die Zahl sieben, und so kan leicht aus allen Blumen, Kräutern, Steinen und Thieren geschlossen werden, daß ein allgemeiner einiger Geist der Natur aus dem Heiligthum des Himmels ausgehe, den Raum des Himmels ausfülle (Ps. 150, 1) und sich in sieben Kräften, und hernach per combinationes... in unendliche mixta corporificire und specificire." (*Öffentliches Denckmahl...: Von der Wunderkraft GOTTes in den Wasser-Quellen*); eds. BREYMAYER and HÄUSSERMANN, p. 102 = p. 50 of the original edition of 1763. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting by ÖTINGER.)

Thus, we have seen through selected relevant citations, how ÖTINGER in his cosmogony puts to profit the subsidiary theory he formed on the corporification of spiritual substance, and probably why his cosmogonical theory remained fragmentary. A theory of the divine *generation* of the world, however, had to be accompanied by one treating the *sustentation* by God of the same. It will not surprise us if this theory is again fragmentary in ÖTINGER; in fact, it is scarcely more than the formulation of the idea of a divine *influxus* '*spirituo-corporalis*' on the physical universe. One of the scanty (and fairly cryptic) expositions of it is as follows:

*Corporeality is the most sublime property. ...on the basis of the properties of the Word which became flesh, and on the grounds that God has been manifested in flesh and that the plenitude of God wants to reveal itself in corporeal form...., ...it is certain, that, if God wants to be all in all in such a corporeal manner, He has also wanted, from the very beginning, to influence everything by virtue of such spiritual-corporeal properties. Hence, neither the system of the pre-established harmony nor that of the occasional causes is victorious but the theory of influxus... Amen! So we shall see it with corporeal eyes.*¹⁰⁹

This passage, in which syntax is less than conspicuous, essentially establishes a metaphysical doctrine that is neither of an *influxus physicus*, nor of an *influxus hyperphysicus*. ÖTINGER concludes from the spiritual corporeal nature of God that He ontologically sustains (*sustentatio*) the *material* universe through a spiritual corporeal influence, which is able to act on physical reality. Therefore, the doctrine of the spiritual corporeality of God, as we have suggested, allows ÖTINGER to institute a logically coherent argumentative transition from the theology of the divine essence into natural philosophy, theologically guided and safeguarded by the dogma of the Incarnation of the Word. This transition displays an eschatological aspect as well (cf. the doctrine of *essentificatio*) by virtue of ÖTINGER's reference to the spiritual bodies of the resurrected, for the closing line of the citation hints at the return of the world into God when, says ÖTINGER with ST. PAUL, God will be all in all, and the saved shall see God with spiritual-corporeal eyes.

This idea of a divine *influxus* '*spirituo-corporalis*' on the physical universe is, as ÖTINGER points out, different from two grand rationalist metaphysical systems of early modernity, specifically that of LEIBNIZ (*harmonia praestabilita*), and that of MALEBRANCHE (*occasionalismus*), respectively. Its specific differences are the Cabbalistic derivation of the material universe from the depth of divine essence, and the literally essential, mediating role, which the divine Word plays in the generation of the world. Since the Word of God is also the Saviour, the return of the world into God is, if latently, a soteriological event as well in this conception.

¹⁰⁹“Cörperlichkeit ist die höchste Eigenschaft. ...aus den Eigenschaften des Worts, das Fleisch worden, und (aus dem,) daß Gott im Fleisch geoffenbahret worden und daß die Fülle der Gottheit sich cörperlich will offenbahren...., ...ist gewiß, daß, wo GOTT einmahl auf solche leibliche Art alles in allem zu seyn vorhat, GOTT auch von Anfang mit solchen geistlich-leiblichen Eigenschaften influire in alles (vorhat,) und also weder Systema Harmoniae noch Occasionum, sondern Influxus den Preis... behalte. Amen! also werden wir es mit leiblichen Augen sehen.” (Offentliches Denckmahl...: Von Licht und Finsterniß, III. Schlußrede, Von den Grund-Begriffen Heil. Schrift; eds. BREYMAYER and HÄUSSERMANN, p. 239 = pp. 374–375 of the original edition of 1763. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting by ÖTINGER.)

The spiritual body of God as the vivifying principle of the physical world (cf. *supra*, Section 8) imparts life to the living beings in the course of God's *influxus spirituo-corporalis*. This means that God's *corpus spirituale* is the immediate source of the vegetative, sensitive and procreative powers of the 'creatures', and of the unity of their powers of life in general:

God does not have any primary properties of either the wind, the fire or the water. He is an invisible spirit but in His glory, He gives Himself, by virtue of His unlimited freedom, properties which are like those of the creatures, in order to be able to communicate Himself with the creatures in spirit and life. ... His glory is a genuine light with spiritual and corporeal properties... Therefore, its abode is the celestial earth, i.e., the purest salt, of which Jesus speaks and which, again, puts on a body in the form of (material) salt... In the divine revelation, everything is the celestial earth, in which God's glory manifests itself. Hence, in the creatures, this celestial earth is the noblest spirit and the living, flowering, and moving, i.e., the bond of the forces of life. The celestial earth is the seat of the colours, of fertility, and of love. It possesses all corporeal and spiritual properties of every creature, except their imperfections. It is all in all, and in God, it is all in one. In Jesus Christ, the plenitude of the Godhead should appear σωματικῶς, 'corporeally' in eternity. Therefore, corporeality is a token of perfection and not imperfection in the divine plenitude; this is why it is represented now as a spirit, now as a 'blooming' tincture, now as an all-filling, pervasive force, now – in faith – as a power which fills up all these... Spirit, life, and glory are invariably together...¹¹⁰

When all is said and done, God communicates Himself (*sich mittheilen*) with 'creation' through the vivifying principle of the *Sh'chinā*, *Herrlichkeit*, the mediating instrument between *God* and phenomenal *Nature*. The *Sh'chinā* is the seat of all powers related to life and not only in a biological sense, but also, to be sure, in a moral sense with reference to eternal life ("im *Glauben*"). The *sine qua non* of this mediation between supraessential origin and life in a moral as well as biological sense is the umbrella-term *Leib*, which, in this passage, can clearly refer to both God's spiritual body and to physical bodies, τὰ σώματα. But if God is thus conceived as an all-filling, pervasive force ("eine alles erfüllende, eindringende Kraft"), which is *quasi*-physically, intimately present in finite material beings, then a philosophical

¹¹⁰“GOTT hat keine elementische Eigenschafften des Windes, des Feuers, des Wassers, er ist ein unsichtbarer Geist, aber in der Herrlichkeit gibt er sich selbst aus unumschrenkter Freyheit solche der Creatur näher kommende Eigenschafften, damit er sich mit seiner Güte der Creatur mittheilen könne im Geist und Leben. ... Sie (scil. die Herrlichkeit) ist ein wahrhaftiges Licht mit geistlich-leiblichen Eigenschafften (Act. 22, 11). Daher ist ihr Sitz die himmlische Erde oder das allerreinste Saltz, davon JESUS sagt, und sie corporificirt sich wieder in Saltz... Alles ist in heiliger Offenbarung die himmlische Erde, und darinn offenbahrt sich die Herrlichkeit. Sie ist also in den Creaturen der alleredelste Geist und das grünen, blühen und weben oder das Band der Kräfte des Lebens. Sie ist der Sitz der Farben, der Fruchtbarkeit und der Liebe. Sie hat alle leibliche und geistliche Eigenschafften aller Creaturen, nur daß die Unvollkommenheiten hinweg müssen. Sie ist alles in allem, und in GOTT ist sie alles in einem. In JESU Christo aber solle die Fülle der Gottheit σωματικῶς, 'leibhaft' erscheinen in Ewigkeit. Dahero ist leibhaft werden ihre Vollkommenheit und keine Unvollkommenheit, daher wird sie bald als ein Geist, bald als eine blühende Tinctur, bald als eine alles erfüllende, eindringende Kraft und bald im Glauben, als eine alle diese erfüllende Kraft... beschrieben (Luc. 8, 46). Geist, Leben und Herrlichkeit seynd beständig beysammen....” (Öffentliches Denckmahl...: (Schriftstellen von Geist, Herrlichkeit und Leben), (Realparallelen vom Geist); eds. BREYMAIER and HÄUSSERMANN, p. 204 = pp. 289–290 of the original edition 1763. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting by ÖTINGER.)

effort will have to be made in order to distinguish God from a hypothetical *anima universi*. The world soul, a hypothetical, quasi-divine being, has almost the same philosophical function as a supreme being so conceived: vivification, immediate presence, etc. In the following point, we shall see to what extent ÖTINGER succeeded in philosophically establishing and enforcing that distinction, and what his position in general was on the *anima mundi*-, and related theories.

11 ÖTINGER's Rejection of the Identification of God with the Weltseele. His Non-exhaustive Differentiation of Geist from Seele, Within His System of Vivifying Principles. His Possible Alternative of the Weltseele-Theory: the Idea of a Spiritus Universalis. Recapitulation

ÖTINGER is, first and foremost, a Scriptural monotheistic theologian, so he dismisses the theological perspectives offered by rational theology and by the strong *anima mundi*-theory (the identification of God with a world soul) alike. A philosophical analysis of his dismissal of that identification has to consider, first, how he delimits the concept of God from that of the *Weltseele* using the authority of Scripture and a non-exhaustive differentiation of spirit (*Geist*, the category that comprises God also), from soul (*Seele*, a category including, for ÖTINGER, human soul above all). Second, in the particular context of our study, we also have to examine a last, intriguing conception of his, that of a *spiritus universalis* which might possibly be regarded as his alternative of the world soul theory.

Though ÖTINGER's theory concerning God's *influxus spirituo-corporalis* is, to a degree, philosophically sympathetic with the implications of a broadly conceived *anima mundi*-theory (quasi-physical presence of the divine being versus physical presence of a quasi-divine being), he categorically refuses to accept the real identification of God with a *Seele der Welt* in the *Offentliches Denckmahl*, as follows:

Second, we have to make sure that we are not misled by the deceptive persuasion of the philosophers concerning, for instance,

1. *the eternity of the world;*
2. *God as the soul of the world or as a pure capacity of representing all possible worlds, in which concepts God is described by the philosophers without His glory, which consists in the seven burning torches of God's seven spirits...*¹¹¹

¹¹¹“Zweytens ist es darum zu thun, daß man durch falsche Beredung der Welt-Philosophen nicht abgeführt werde, z. Ex. 1. von der Ewigkeit der Welt; 2. von GOTT als einer Seele der Welt oder als einer blossen Kraft, sich alle mögliche Welten vorzustellen, in welchen Begriffen GOTT von den Philosophen ohne seine Herrlichkeit, welche in den sieben brennenden Fackeln der sieben Geister Gottes bestehet, beschrieben wird...” (*Offentliches Denckmahl...: Neue Metaphysische Erwegungen...*, § 12: *Der Herrlichkeit Gottes zerschiedene Eigenschaften*; eds. BREYMAYER and HÄUSSERMANN, p. 180 = p. 234 of the original edition of 1763. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting by ÖTINGER.)

The main problem, says ÖTINGER, with the *anima mundi*-theory and the Leibnizian concept of God alike is that both of them neglect the doctrine of the seven glorious emanations of God. Since ÖTINGER is able to reveal that doctrine in every line of Scripture, he essentially drops the idea of a universal soul without a philosophical analysis. This authority-based position is, in philosophical terms, insufficiently buttressed by an accidental conceptual distinction he casually establishes between *spirit* and *soul* in another chapter of the same book. Interpreting Col. 2:5, he argues here in the following manner:

*Col. 2:5: For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.
Hence, the spirit is able to be present somewhere even from the most distant place, which, without this, would be impossible for the soul. The soul may be likened to wood; the spirit, to fire, the spiritual expansion of which is undetermined.*¹¹²

Geist, as the highest part of *human* soul, is thus asserted to have a more spiritual constitution of substance than soul, as well as a capacity of indefinite spiritual extension. However, this still does not explain, in a philosophically satisfactory manner, why the *divine Geist* should not be thought to vivify the physical world in the way a universal soul is supposed to do that (*commercium*-relationship with the body, etc.). But ÖTINGER works out the specific difference between spirit (*πνεῦμα*) and soul (*ψυχή*) a bit more carefully in the *Biblisches und Emblematisches Wörterbuch*. Here, the headwords *Geist*, *Seele* and *Tinctur* might possibly help us reconstruct the philosophical foundation of ÖTINGER'S conviction that God may not be thought as a universal soul.

In the *Wörterbuch*, ÖTINGER more systematically presents in a hierarchical quadripartite structure the vivifying principles operating in the human being:¹¹³

Geist: “eine viel dünnere und beweglichere Sache als Luft und Feuer”, “die allerdünnest aufsteigende Körper welche in der Decke der Körper verborgen seyn”

⟨**spirit:** an extremely thin and agile thing⟩

Seele: “Lebens-Grund”, “ein geist-leiblich reines Wesen”, “wohnet im Blut”, “ein umlaufendes in sich selbst laufendes Feuer”

⟨**soul:** the principle of life; a spiritual and corporeal substance; abides in blood⟩

Tinctur: “eine Menge von Atomis, die belebt werden von der Seele”, “das Werkzeug der Seele zur Empfindung und Bewegung”, “diß freye, mehr als ätherische Fluidum”

⟨**tincture:** a group of atoms animated by the soul; a more than aethereal fluid⟩

Nervensaft: “Mittelding zwischen Seele und Leib”, “eine Art eines Amphibii”, “nur der Träger des wahren Fluidi (scil. der Tinctur)”

⟨**nerve fluid:** a mediator between soul and body; an amphibious substance; the carrier of tincture⟩

¹¹²“Col. 2, 5: Ob ich schon im Fleisch abwesend bin, so bin ich doch im Geist mit euch, mich freud und sehend eure Ordnung und die Bevestigung eures Glaubens an Christum. Also kan der Geist in aller Weite gegenwärtig seyn, welches der Seele ohne diß nicht möglich wäre. Die Seele wäre wie das Holtz; der Geist wie das Feuer, dessen geistliche Ausbreitung unbestimmt ist.” (*Öffentliches Denckmahl...: Schriftstellen von Geist, Herrlichkeit und Leben*; eds. BREYMER and HÄUSSERMANN, p. 198 = pp. 275–276 of the original edition of 1763. Transl. *King James Version* and by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting by ÖTINGER.)

¹¹³See the indicated headwords in ed. TSCHIŽEWSKI. ÖTINGER cursorily discusses *Nervensaft* in the first part of the headword *Tinctur* (roman characters by ÖTINGER in the citations).

In this table, the vivifying principles are hierarchically arranged according to their subordination to, and dependance on, each other. A somewhat different arrangement could be possible on the basis of their respective degrees of materiality because there is a lack of clarity in ÖTINGER's text as to whether *Seele* or *Tinctur* is of a more volatile or aethereal constitution. It is noteworthy in metaphysical and theological respects, that both *Geist* and *Tinctur* appear as substances of a double, i.e., divine and human, nature while, as a matter of fact, *Seele* is always only used with reference to the human being. *Geist*, as a denotation of *divine* reality, refers to the Holy Spirit and, as such, is asserted by ÖTINGER to be of a fiery nature (cf. spiritual corporeality of God), and able to exert influence on the soul (also of a fiery constitution) by virtue of its apparent consubstantiality with it.¹¹⁴ But *Geist* is, at the same time, also the not fully immaterial thinking or rational capacity of the *human* soul. Parallely, although *Tinctur* is, on the one hand, certainly a mass of material substances ("eine Menge von Atomis"), it has also from eternity been present in the divine substance ("von Ewigkeit ist sie gewesen in GOtt, aber sie hat sich in alle Dinge miteingebildet").¹¹⁵ On the whole, all vivifying principles seem to have an amphibious character, so to say, regarding substance: each of them is *corporeal* in the specifically Ötingerian double sense of the term, *material* and *spiritual*.

The question, of course, is whether all this helps us in some way in respect of our original dilemma, namely, the philosophical background behind ÖTINGER's refusal to identify God with the *Weltseele*? Well, it certainly does, if indirectly, for it is at least apparent that he really never applies the term '*Seele*' to God. God is never thought of as a *soul* in ÖTINGER's philosophical or Biblical hermeneutical texts. Even though the doctrine of the spiritual corporeality of God, combined with the idea of *corporificatio* of spiritual substance, comes, in philosophical terms, very near to a material conception of divine reality, still, philosophical Cabbala is no Spinozism, let alone in the hands of a Lutheran pastor. In this respect, the specificity of ÖTINGER's Cabbalistic theology is the philosophical preservation of the concept of God-as-He-is-in-Himself, or of God as *Ungrund*. This concept of God logically does not suffer the physical world to be the body of the infinite being, the *ēn-soph*. Though the *boundless one* voluntarily subjects its own essence to representative finite manifestations, these can never exhaust the infinitely productive nucleus of that essence. This, in logical terms, entails that the infinite spirit cannot be correlated definitively and determinatively to a finite body.

In philosophical Cabbala, one may add, the natural world never really *is*, if we take seriously the metaphysical implications of the technical term with which we labelled ÖTINGER's theology of glorious divine epiphany as a theory of *emanation*. An 'outflow' perhaps does not have the necessary consistency or permanence to

¹¹⁴"Der heilige Geist, so fern er die Seele mit Feuer taufet, ist ein wirkliches heiliges Feuer; und die Seele muß auch ein Feuer seyn, weil der heilige Geist diß Seelen-Feuer in einen höhern Stand erheben muß; sonst wäre kein Verhältniß zwischen der Seele und dem Feuer des Geistes." (Headword *Seele*, *ad fin.*; ed. TSCHIZIEWSKI, p. 558.)

¹¹⁵ÖTINGER cites this statement agreeingly from BÖHME's *De tribus principiis*, cap. XII, § 33.

function as an organic body which, through a regulated biological operation, sustains a soul. The philosophical concept of *emanation* seems to imply an eternal condition of flux, change and lack of stability. Thus, a correlation between God as a soul, and the physical world as a body, is impossible within the Ötingerian conceptual framework because *soul* is not applicable to God, while *body* is not applicable to the world in this case. For ÖTINGER, God is a spirit which, vivifying as it is for the natural world, invariably preserves the transcendent splendid isolation of its boundless creative nucleus. But to what extent can this concept of an essentially transcendent God philosophically harmonize with ÖTINGER's idea of a *spiritus universalis*, which, as an emanation of God, ultimately constitutes the substance of, and vivifies, the entire natural universe? Can these two conceptions be logically reconciled with each other within the same *system* of theology and natural philosophy? Is it possible to preserve God's absolute transcendence as well as His 'amphibious' influence on the finite universe (*inter influxum physicum et influxum hyperphysicum*) by the instrumentality of a *spiritus universalis*?

As we anticipated under the opening paragraph of the present Section 11, it is our last task to find out if ÖTINGER still does not propose something like an idiosyncratic variant of the world soul theory since his unsystematic idea of a *spiritus universalis* which animates the entire physical nature comes, in terms of effective philosophical content, near the *anima mundi*-theory, though the universal agent it posits is not identified as *soul*. The passage in which ÖTINGER first proposes his conception of this world *spirit* reads as follows:

Natural scientists call these upper waters by several different names. If you open the book written by Mr Le Cat,¹¹⁶ you will find a description of the properties of this pure and subtle substance. He says that it is the instrument of motion and sensation, the middle substance between the soul and the body..., an amphibious thing which partakes of material as well as immaterial reality. This universal spirit abides in all springs. I know how this spirit must be separated from common water and turned into the purest salt-earth. This is the healing, wholesome substance which gives acidulous springs their medicinal effect.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶Cf. "Mémoire qui a remporté le prix sur la question proposée par l'Académie pour le sujet du prix de l'année 1753. Par M. Le Cat, Docteur en Médecine etc." (See bibliography under LE CAT 1753). In pages 20–21, LE CAT expounds his position on the *human neural liquid*, a modification of the 'universal spirit', with the following words: "1. ... C'est, avons-nous dit, l'instrument du mouvement & du sentiment; c'est une substance médiatrice entre l'ame & le corps. ... 2. Ces traits caractérisent le fluide des nerfs, espèce d'Être amphibie, matière par son impénétrabilité & sa puissance impulsive; mais suprême espèce de cette classe, il est en même temps affecté par son auteur (God) d'une nuance supérieure, qui le lie avec l'Être immatériel (the soul), & par là l'annoblit & l'élève à cette nature mitoyenne qui le caractérise, & fait la source de toutes ses propriétés."

¹¹⁷"Diese obere Wasser haben bey de{n} Natur-Forschern vielerley Namen. Man schlage auf das Buch... welches... Monsieur Le Cat... geschrieben hat, so wird man die Eigenschaften dieses reinen und subtilen Wesens beschrieben finden. Er sagt: Es ist das Instrument der Bewegung und Empfindung, es ist die mittlere Substanz zwischen der Seele und dem Leib (p.20.21), ein Amphibium von Materiel und Immatériel. Dieser Spiritus universalis wohnt in allen Quellen. Ich weiß den Handgrif, wie man diesen Geist aus dem gemeinen Wasser abscheiden und zur allerersten Salz-Erde machen soll. Dieses ist das heilbare gesundmachende Wesen, welches in den

Spring water is a visible representation of the invisible powers of God¹¹⁸—this is our author's initial thesis from which he develops the above-cited argument. Every kind of water in the natural world, he says further, contains the general spirit of Nature (“den *allgemeinen Geist der Natur*”, an unspecified agent),¹¹⁹ and a certain amount of the *upper waters* (cf. Gen. I:6–7), which he, in the passage preceding the cited section, anagogically interprets as the words of God (“*Es sind aber diese obere Wasser nichts anders als wesentliche Worte, die aus dem Mund GOTTES gehen*”).¹²⁰ These creative words are, at the same time, a pure and subtle substance (“*reines und subtiles Wesen*”), which is the instrument of movement and sensation, in short, the principle of life in finite living beings. As, from a logical point of view, this entity mediates between God and nature, body and soul, it is, in terms of substance, both material (so it can act on matter) and immaterial (insofar as it is the divine *logos*). This is the *spiritus universalis*; in truth, different from the concept of an *anima universi*, but nevertheless sharing with it several essential attributes.

It has to be pointed out that ÖTINGER, here, draws heavily on his source, LE CAT's *Mémoire*. LE CAT, a physician and anatomist, a famous scholar and member of several academies of his time, thought, on the basis of his vast medical experience, that nerve fluid (*le fluide des nerfs*, ‘*Nervensaft*’ in ÖTINGER's *Biblisches und Emblematisches Wörterbuch*) is a mixture of the animal spirits with the neural lymph, and a specific modification of an all-pervading, partly material, partly immaterial “*esprit universel*”.¹²¹ ÖTINGER, thus, simply borrowed from LE CAT the ready-made theory of the *spiritus universalis* as a mediating amphibious agent between the transcendent God and material nature.

Sauerbrunnen so heilbringend ist.” (*Öffentliches Denckmahl...: Von der Wunder-Kraft GOTTES in den Wasser-Quellen*; eds. BREYMAYER and HÄUSSERMANN, p. 100 = p. 45 of the original edition of 1763. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, underlining added; roman characters by ÖTINGER.) The whole argument is part of ÖTINGER's explanation of why the spring-water of Bad Teinach, near which also princess ANTONIA's *Lehr-Tafel* is, is so wholesome.

¹¹⁸Cf. “...*die Quellen... sichtbare Abbildungen der unsichtbaren Kräften GOTTES sind!*” (*Ibid.*, p. 100 = p. 44 of the original edition of 1763; roman characters by ÖTINGER.)

¹¹⁹*Ibid.* This philosophically undetermined agent may or may not be identical with ÖTINGER's *spiritus universalis*.

¹²⁰*Ibid.*

¹²¹In LE CAT's conviction, the human neural liquid, *le fluide des nerfs* is a specially modified part of a universal vivifying spirit. As the title of Article III, § III of his *Mémoire* puts it, “*Le fluide nerveux est une portion de l'esprit vivifiant & universel, qui a sa source dans tous les fluides, dans tous les matériaux de l'Univers, & qui se manifeste plus sensiblement dans les Etres doués de quelque vie.*” (LE CAT 1753, p. 68; literally the same in the second edition, cf. LE CAT 1765, p. 124) In our body, this universal spirit is modified into the neural liquid by the internal constitution of the organs to which it has to accommodate itself, and is subservient to the soul. In the material frame of the universe, then, it functions as the agent of the will of God: “...*tout cela n'est que nôtre fluide diversifié par les diverses nuances que lui donnent les differens organes avec lesquels il s'allie: sa source est dans tous les fluides, dans tous les matériaux de l'Univers, où il est le Ministre des volontés de son auteur, comme introduit chez nous il devient l'agent de l'Etre qui nous anime.*” (*Ibid.*, p. 21; text slightly modified in the second edition, cf. LE CAT 1765, p. 38.)

ÖTINGER then digresses on the hydrological explorations in Piemonte of a (today) lesser-known seventeenth-century mineralogist, Henry de ROCHAS d'Ayglun,¹²² and on this account, further elaborates on the concept of (universal) *Geist*. ÖTINGER goes back to the text of a very important, early modern forum of Hermetic-alechemistic ideas, the *Theatrum Chemicum*:

*He (ROCHAS d'Ayglun) took along some of the hot water with himself and found that it contained a soft sulphurous substance and an – as he calls it – hermetic-celestial salt. The only cause of this hot rippling water... was the spirit of this celestial salt and not a subterranean fire. He took with himself some of the earth over which this hot source run and experimented on it till he came to the right conclusion that the dead earth is always re-animated and renewed by this vivifying spirit. ...he found it also certain that the minerals grow and increase in volume by virtue of this spirit; ... Finally, he found that the mineral-laden earth is the mother and the womb which has to hold this valuable spirit. This, then, gets covered with salts in the earth and becomes a corporeal substance, which is the greatest treasure of nature.*¹²³

If ÖTINGER, here, still talks about the *universal spirit* (which is reasonable to suppose on the basis of the context), then that spirit is further characterized as the element which pervades planet Earth and continuously generates life in all its different parts. The natural world would be dead without the constant favorable influence of this vivifying spirit, says ÖTINGER. In this respect, the Earth is metaphorically considered by

¹²²Cf. Henry de ROCHAS d'Ayglun: "*Tractatus de observationibus novis et vera cognitione aquarum mineralium et de illarum qualitibus & virtutibus antehac incognitis: Item de spiritu universalis.*" Originally written in French (*Traicté des observations nouvelles et vraye cognoissance des eavx minerales & de leur qualitez & vertus, ci-deuant incogneuës: Ensemble de l'Esprit Vniversal*, Paris 1634), this text was translated into Latin by J. J. HEILMANN and published in vol. VI of the *Theatrum Chemicum*, 1661 (see bibliography under ROCHAS, H. de). The six bulky volumes of the *Theatrum Chemicum*, published "Argentorati" (in Strasbourg), were an abundant source of primary texts as well as commentaries conceived in the Hermetic tradition and treating such topics as mineralogy, alchemy, the philosopher's stone etc. Among other things, it transmitted (vol. VI, p. 715) the Latin text of the *Tabula smaragdina*, attributed to the god Hermes Trismegistos himself, the important medieval alechemistic treatise *Turba philosophorum*, but also very numerous other esoteric texts by, among others, Raimundus LULLUS, ALBERTUS MAGNUS, PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA etc. In this collection, several other treatises deal with the concepts of *anima mundi* and *spiritus mundi*, respectively. For a 'geistesgeschichtliche' introduction into the *Theatrum Chemicum*, see vol. I (*Introduzione*) in BARRACANO ed.

¹²³"*Von dem warmen (scil. Wasser) nahm er mit sich und fand, daß ein schweflich zart Wesen, und ein, wie er es nennt, hermetisch-himmlisch Salz darinnen enthalten war. Der Geist dieses himmlischen Salzes... war allein die Ursache dieses warm wallenden Wassers, und kein unterirdisches Feuer: Er nahm auch von der Erde, worüber diese warme Brunnen geloffen, mit sich, und experimentirte, biß er den richtigen Schluß hat machen können, daß die todte Erde mit dem lebendigmachenden Geist immer erweckt und erneuret werde. ...er fand auch gewiß, daß die Erzte von diesem Geist wachsen und zunehmen; ... Er fand endlich, daß die mineralische Erde allda die Mutter und Matrix seye, den kostbaren Geist aufzubehalten, welcher sich hernach in der Erde mit Salz überkleidet und zu einem leiblichen Wesen wird, welches der größte Schatz der Natur ist.*" (ÖTINGER: *Öffentliches Denckmahl...: Von der Wunder-Kraft GÖttes in den Wasser-Quellen*; eds. BREYMAYER and HÄUSSERMANN, pp. 101–102 = pp. 48–49 of the original edition of 1763. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting by ÖTINGER.)

him as a womb that receives, and vests with body, this certainly divine spirit. Even the minerals grow in virtue of its presence and influence. Thus, material substance is exposed to the generative and formative influence of a higher, both material and immaterial agent.

After all this, one is perhaps not so surprised to find that ÖTINGER's immediate source here, ROCHAS d'Ayglun as translated by J. J. HEILMANN, employs the term *anima mundi* in the Latin text of the corresponding passage of ROCHAS d'Ayglun's *Tractatus*, to designate the entity ÖTINGER called *spiritus universalis* above. ROCHAS D'Ayglun, as translated by HEILMANN, says that:

*"This discovery was very dear to me because I learned from it that the agent which resuscitated the dead earth was no corporeal thing but the universal spirit, the soul of the world, and the treasury of nature, without which the earth would be completely barren; and from this, I concluded that the other earth which is in the bowels of its mine is continuously vivified and refreshed by this spirit..."*¹²⁴

Thus, ÖTINGER dropped the name, but kept the function and the attributes of the *anima mundi*! His singular, and certainly conscious, alteration of the text of his source gives us now the occasion for a determinative philosophical analysis of his multifarious, explicit or implicit, convictions related to the *anima mundi*-theory.

First, however, an important historical hint. Whether ÖTINGER really disguises a kind of *anima mundi*-theory in his conception of a universal spirit or not, it is certain that his rudimentary description of the power and activity of that spirit calls to mind the respective theories of BAADER and SCHELLING concerning the *Weltseele*. For these philosophers, as we are going to see in Part 4, the world soul is the omnipresent vivifying and also chemically, physically (thermodynamics, electricity, magnetism), as well as meteorologically active agent, which penetrates and fills up the inmost recesses of our planet and the natural universe in general. In their relevant texts, though, BAADER and SCHELLING expound to be sure almost exclusively experimental, formalized and quantified natural scientific theories, and their discourse in their earlier works does not bear any conspicuous mark of Cabbalistic influence either. Still, the fundamental idea that the natural world is, as it were, immersed in, and exposed to, the procreative ocean of a (quasi-)infinite and, to a

¹²⁴*"Haec res expectationi meae fuit gratissima, quia inde cognovi, illud quod terram istam mortuam resuscitavit, non esse rem quandam corporalem sed Spiritum Universalem, animam mundi, & Naturae thesaurum, sine quo illa prorsus impotens esset: unde conclusi alteram terram in visceribus minerae (sic) suae per Spiritum istum continua serie vivificari & restaurari..."* (French original translated into Latin by J. J. HEILMANN; ROCHAS D'Ayglun 1661, p. 723. English transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting added.) In the original French edition of the treatise (*Chapitre I: Des Eaux Soulphreuses*), ROCHAS D'Ayglun expressed himself with the following words: "...de quoy ie fus infiniment content et satisfait, reconnoissant bien que ce qui avoit ressuscité cette terre morte, n'estoit pas une chose corporelle, mais vn esprit vniuersel, l'ame du Monde et le tresor de la Nature, sans lequel elle seroit tout à fait impuissante; dequoy ie tiray vne consequence, que cest esprit viufigioit et restauroit continuellement l'autre terre dans les entrailles de sa miniere, comme ie diray plus amplement en son lieu." (ROCHAS, H. de, 1634, pp. 31–32, marginal indication "L'esprit vniuersel ame du Monde"; highlighting added.)

certain degree, supra-material, amphibious being, the active principle behind all natural change is common to ÖTINGER, BAADER and SCHELLING alike.

In terms of a systematic philosophical analysis, it seems that, on the one hand, ÖTINGER is certainly not ready to accept the identification of God with a universal soul, as this would logically conflict with the Christian concept of God as a transcendent, perfectly simple substance subsisting in the form of three persons. In his definition of God, offered in the *Theologia ex idea vitae deducta* (I. *De Deo*, § 13), ÖTINGER makes it unmistakably clear that the trinitarian God he is devoted to in religion is different from *world* and *soul* alike: “*God is an invisible infinite spirit, distinct from the world and from soul. It is a spiritual essence, which is 1. one... 2. most simple... 3. eternal... 4. immeasurable... 5. intelligent and possessed of volition... 6. existing in three persons*”.¹²⁵ Hence, God is neither the world nor a soul, so, *a fortiori*, nor the soul of the world. Yet, on the other hand, ÖTINGER'S unsystematized concept of a *spiritus universalis*, which he, *nota bene*, only advances and considers as a hypothesis of *other* authors, occupies a philosophically ambiguous position between God and the material universe in that it is classed as a spirit (so it falls in the same category of substance as God, a *spiritus*), and in that it is at least an immediate emanation of God as well as an omnipresent generative and formative principle of life in the entire material universe.

The great philosophical difficulty with ÖTINGER'S *spiritus universalis*-hypothesis is that our author seems to derive, by his theory of *corporificatio* and *specificatio*, finite material substances ultimately from the divine *Geist* (God considered according to His essence as a spirit) in a subsequent passage of the same argument in the *Öffentliches Denckmahl*.¹²⁶ Thus, when all is said and done, one just might argue that ÖTINGER, while refusing to apply the term *anima mundi* on God, actually conceives of God as a spirit that is more than only the *extramundane efficient cause* of the universe. It seems that God, for him, is a *spiritus universalis* possessed with some essential attributes of the universal soul (like vivification through a quasi-material influx, and omnipresence) as well as the principle of the constitution of material substance.

We saw above (Section 7) that the tantalizing metaphysical question in ÖTINGER'S theory of the eternal cosmogonical emanation of God is whether there *is* a real difference between infinite divine essence and the finite manifestations of the same? Likewise, we have found the principle of identity and difference to be the central philosophical enigma of Böhmanian theology (cf. Section 4). On the basis of this long investigation, we may propose the overall metaphysical appraisal of this

¹²⁵“*Deus est Spiritus invisibilis, infinitus a mundo et anima distinctus. Essentia spiritualis 1. Una... 2. Simplicissima... 3. Aeterna... 4. Immensa... 5. Intelligens et volens... 6. In tribus personis subsistens.*” (*Theologia ex idea vitae deducta*, I. *De Deo*, § 13; *De Definitione Dei*, ed. OHLY, vol. I, p. 90. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

¹²⁶Cf. the citation *supra* (Section 6) beginning with “*Der Geist Gottes ist ein einiger Geist...*” (*Öffentliches Denckmahl...: Von der Wunder-Kraft Gottes in den Wasser-Quellen*; eds. BREYMEYER and HÄUSSERMANN, p. 102 = p. 50 of the original edition of 1763.)

Christian Cabbalistic theological school that its protagonists elaborated a theology in terms of which the infinite being – to a certain degree and in a specific restricted sense – is *substantially-constitutively* present in finite, this-worldly substances, or, alternatively, that God's infinite substance *comes to be* the finite universe. This interpretation is further corroborated by § 34 of part I of ÖTINGER's *Theologia ex idea vitae deducta*, where he cautiously questions the philosophical validity of the dogma of *creatio ex nihilo*, arguing that we do not have a genuine concept of creation out of *nihil negativum* and that this doctrine is not supported by textual evidence in Scripture:

Thesis III. Creation is conceived to take place from purely negative nihil. But even if we do acknowledge this proposition, we do not have a genuine understanding of it. In fact, Scripture does not say anything to this effect, as we have pointed out above. Calling into existence the things which are not is not the same as creating them from purely negative nihil. Add that the Bible says: ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα (from whom the entire universe came to be). Certainly, something received the order to come forward freely from God, namely, the thing by which He called into existence the things that had not been. At any rate, we have no idea of how it happened that an immobile cause produced a mobile effect. We have relative ideas of motion, space, and time, no absolute ideas. We must be reticent on these issues and rest satisfied that we can call God, with a sincere heart, the Creator of Heaven and Earth. ... It is enough that Creation is an act that demands infinite power, which belongs to God only, and that everything had pre-existed in the Son before the universe was created.¹²⁷

In this *argumentum ab ignorantia*, ÖTINGER, first and foremost, concentrates on the constitutive role the Word of God played in creation. The Word came forth from the essence of God (ἐξ οὗ, *ex Deo*); and, through the intelligible world hidden in the spiritual body of the Christ, by the eternal ideas or principles of all reality, God ultimately called to existence the material corporeal universe.

After all, it is an almost insolvable interpretative task to determine where, according to BÖHME and ÖTINGER, the infinite being *ends* and where finite substances *begin* (to put it in plain metaphysical terms). In their theology, the respective, finite and infinite substances are not *adjacent* (as they are in a theology of extramundane, causal divine presence, or in physico-theology), but essentially *fuse*, as it were, at an indefinite point of intersection, where the one constitutively passes or flows over into the other. BÖHME's and ÖTINGER's respective problematic theories on a soul or spirit of the world, then, seem an exponent of this intricate fundamental metaphysical position of theirs, by which they had, in a certain aspect,

¹²⁷“*Th(esis) III. Creatio concipitur facta ex nihilo pure negativo. Sed nos, etsi id asseramus, genuinum tamen conceptum non habemus hujus propositionis. Scriptura certe sic non loquitur, ut jam supradictum est. Vocare quae non sunt ut sint, non est ex nihilo pure negativo creare. Adde quod dicatur: ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα. Certe aliquid ex Deo libere prodire jussum est, sc. id per quod vocavit ea quae non sunt ut sint. Nos sane nescimus, qui factum ut immobile effectum extraposerit mobilem. Motus, spatii, temporis respectivas ideas habemus, non absolutas. Silendum de his, et acquiescendum, quod possimus Deum vero corde creatorem coeli et terrae appellare. ... Sufficit creationem requirere virtutem infinitam, soli Deo competentem, et omnia constitisse in filio priusquam facta sunt.”* (*Theologia ex idea vitae deducta*, I. *De Deo*, § 34: *Creatio an ex nihilo negativo*, ed. OHLY, vol. I, p. 102. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting, in Scriptural citations, by ÖTINGER.)

philosophically anticipated the early German Romantic existential experience of the soul's participation in the divine, and their doctrine of the substantial fusion of the Infinite with the Finite (as it was formulated by, e.g., SCHELLING in his 1806 *Abhandlung über das Verhältnis des und des Idealen...*). BÖHME's and ÖTINGER's contribution, proved in historical respect by E. BENZ (cf. *Les sources mystiques de la philosophie romantique allemande*, see bibliography), to early German Romantic thought was, hence, at least as enriching, seminal, and even essential as that of Immanuel KANT.¹²⁸

The transition that now follows from ÖTINGER, an expert of the Jewish mystical tradition, to SPINOZA and his interpreters, and then to LESSING, essentially a rational theologian, will not seem unjustified if we recall that both SPINOZA and LESSING were acquainted with Cabbalistic ideas as, for instance, *ēn-soph* ("the boundless"), i.e., God conceived as the unbounded one or the theory of the cosmogonical pulsation of God. As a matter of fact, SPINOZA had first-hand knowledge of philosophical Cabbala as several passages in his correspondence and in the *Ethica*,¹²⁹ as well as several items in his personal library, prove (cf. Section 11 of Chapter 7). As far as LESSING is concerned, the Cabbalistic idea of the cosmogonical pulsation of God appears precisely in the one and only passage of JACOBI's book *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza*, where LESSING explicitly talks about the world soul.

Spinozism has always, even up to recent times, been brought into a philosophical relation with the *anima mundi*-theory. Albeit this view, first proffered probably by BAYLE, is, as we will see, lacking proper philosophical foundation, Spinozism, for the reason just stated, cannot be neglected by our investigation. Indeed, it is precisely the problematic interpretation of Spinozism that will lead us further on towards the study of LESSING's alleged sympathy for the concept of the universal soul.

¹²⁸W. SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN also points to the genetic relationship there is between, more specifically, BÖHME's trinitarian theology and that of the middle SCHELLING, as he says on account of the *Freiheitsschrift* that: "Einmal ist es die innertrinitarische Funktion des Logos, also die Selbstverdoppelung des Vaters, die als Selbstfindung des göttlichen Willens begriffen wird: Die Konnotationen zur Trinitätstheologie ebenso wie zu Böhmes Von der Gnadenwahl sind evident." (SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN 2006, p. 161.)

¹²⁹Cf., e.g., epistle *OP* № XXI (GEBHARDT LXXIII), *ad in.*; *Ethica*, pars II, *propositio* VII, *scholium* etc.

Chapter 7

The Philosophical Incompatibility of SPINOZA'S System with the World Soul Theory. BAYLE'S Identification of Spinozism with the World Soul Theory, and WACHTER'S Denial of the Same. LESSING'S Statement Concerning the World Soul, and His Alleged Spinozism in JACOBI'S *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza* (1785), MENDELSSOHN'S *Morgenstunden* (1785), and HERDER'S *Gott. Einige Gespräche* (1787). HERDER'S Rejection of the Identification of God with the *Weltseele*

1 SPINOZA'S Pananimism. His General Conception and Definition of the Soul in the *Korte verhandelung*, Second Appendix: *Van de menschelyke ziel* (approx. 1660–1662, publ. 1862), the *Cogitata metaphysica* (1663), and the *Epistles* OP N^oXXXIV (1665) and XXI (1675)

As we have just mentioned, Spinozism, i.e., Baruch SPINOZA'S (1632–1676) system, or, more specifically, its psychological facet – his theory of the mind – has been considered by many as philosophically closely related to the theory of the world soul. The ground for establishing this alleged link has been what is termed by S. ZAC as SPINOZA'S *animism*:¹ the idea that 'everything is animate to some

¹Cf. ZAC, S.: *L'idée de vie dans la philosophie de Spinoza* (1963; see bibliography), especially ch. III: "Toutes les choses sont animées à des degrés différents", pp. 86–103. A section on the alleged relation of the *anima mundi* theory to Spinozism is to be found on pp. 89–90. R. BOUVERESSE (see bibliography) applies the term *animisme universel* on SPINOZA'S philosophy.

specific degree', "... *omnia, quamvis diversis gradibus, animata tamen sunt*".² If human mind, *mens humana* is "nothing else than the idea of an individual thing actually existing"³ (i.e., if *mind* is a kind of *idea* in that it is knowledge of the body correlated to it), and if, analogically, the divine mind is also one universal *idea*, then God, one of whose essential attributes is the material universe (the world of *extensio*) for SPINOZA, could be regarded as a mind correlated with that universe, i.e., as a sort of higher *anima mundi*. This argument can be built on such Spinozan texts as deal with the concepts of God and soul, or mind, respectively, first and foremost, on parts I and II (but also on the rest) of the *Ethica*, on epistles *OP* № XXI (GEBHARDT LXXIII) and № XXXIV (GEBHARDT XXI),⁴ on the second appendix, *On the Human Soul (Van de menschelyke ziel)*, but also on some other crucial chapters, of the *Short Treatise (Korte verhandeling)*, as well as on the appendix entitled, *Metaphysical Thoughts (Cogitata metaphysica)* of an essentially interpretative text, SPINOZA'S *Principles of the Cartesian Philosophy (Renati Des Cartes Principiorum Philosophiae Pars I, & II)*, as far as it is in philosophical accord with SPINOZA'S doctrine proper.

Regarding the philological and chronological aspects of these texts, MIGNINI finds it likely, first, that SPINOZA wrote the *Korte verhandeling van God, de mensch en deszelvs welstand* originally in Latin.⁵ In GEBHARDT'S opinion, its original title may have been *Treatise Concerning God, the Rational Soul, and the Utmost*

²*Ethica ordine geometrico demonstrata, pars II, propositio XIII, scholium*; (JELLES and RIEUWERTSZ, eds.), p. 52. Our references are throughout to the *Opera posthuma (OP)*, published with the monogram only of the author, by the anonymous editors J. JELLES and J. RIEUWERTSZ in December 1677 (see bibliography under (JELLES and RIEUWERTSZ, eds.)). The reason for our choice is that this was the edition the late seventeenth and most of the eighteenth century knew and used, so among others LEIBNIZ and JACOBI. LESSING, by contrast, and others, used the 1744 German translation of the *Ethica*, which was accompanied by Ch. WOLFF'S refutation of Spinozism (*B. v. S. Sittenlehre widerleget von dem berühmten Weltweisen unserer Zeit Herrn Christian Wolf*. Aus dem Lateinischen übersetzt. Frankfurt und Leipzig, 1744; cf. ÉCOLE ed., §. III: *Materialien und Dokumente*, vol. 15). The *Korte verhandeling*, not included in the *Opera posthuma* of 1677 because lost and re-discovered at a public auction only in the nineteenth century (*editio princeps*: VAN VLOTEN 1862), is in turn cited from the bilingual (Dutch-Italian) critical edition of F. MIGNINI (see bibliography). MIGNINI offers a philologically very careful re-establishment of the original text (one chief virtue of which is interpretative interpunctuation), and by far surpasses in scientific accuracy the edition of GEBHARDT (see bibliography), let alone that of VAN VLOTEN and LAND.

³"*idea rei alicujus singularis actu existentis ...*" (*Ethica, pars II, propositio XI*; (JELLES and RIEUWERTSZ, eds.), p. 50. English transl. by WHITE and STIRLING, p. 377.)

⁴*OP* stands for the *Opera posthuma* edited by (JELLES and RIEUWERTSZ). In the *OP*, SPINOZA'S epistles are arranged into groups according to SPINOZA'S penpartners, whereas GEBHARDT kept the ordering of the edition of VAN VLOTEN and LAND, who had re-arranged the epistles into a chronological order.

⁵MIGNINI ed., p. 97. As is known, the Latin original is lost. MIGNINI adds that the Dutch translator was probably J. BOUWMEESTER (and not P. BALLING; *ibid.*, p. 98). MIGNINI'S summary of the genesis of the text (*ibid.*, pp. 97–99) on many points significantly alters and improves GEBHARDT'S reconstruction (cf. GEBHARDT ed., vol. I, pp. 426–432; cf. also FREUDENTHAL 1977, *Erster Teil*, pp. 99–104; RÖD, pp. 36–38).

Felicity of Man (Tractatus de Deo, anima rationali & summa hominis felicitate).⁶ MIGNINI puts the genesis of the text into the earlier part of the three years SPINOZA spent in Rijnsburg (1660–1662), and, in particular, into late 1660.⁷ The *Korte verhandeling*, possibly the second philosophical text of SPINOZA (MIGNINI thinks it may have been preceded by the *Treatise Concerning the Emendation of the Intellect, Tractatus de intellectus emendatione*),⁸ but in any case, SPINOZA'S first systematic philosophical work, is a synthesizing prefiguration of his *opus magnum*, the *Ethica*. Since it already contains the essential Spinozan doctrines regarding substance, the absence of free will (*praedestinatie*), soul, etc., of the mature system, it is philologically–philosophically legitimate to utilize it, despite its early composition date and sketchy character, in the interpretation of Spinozism in its full-fledged form. It is actually probable, specifies MIGNINI, that SPINOZA had been still working on the *Short Treatise*, when he already started the composition of the *Ethics*.⁹ As W. RÖD says, the *Korte verhandeling* philosophically relates to the *Ethica* as “the bud to the blooming flower”.¹⁰

The important point for our study is that, despite the many vicissitudes its text underwent, the *Korte verhandeling* has remained an astonishingly dependable source of SPINOZA'S original ideas. The second appendix to the text, *Van de menschelyke ziel* is a very compact and syntactically often knotty, but also extremely instructive, early exposition of SPINOZA'S teaching of the soul, of his doctrine of ‘pananimism’.

Next, SPINOZA'S geometrically arranged account of the Cartesian principles of philosophy was his first *published*, interpretative work, which appeared, with the indication of his full name, in 1663. The whole *Renati Des Cartes Principiorum Philosophiae Pars I, & II*, together with the appendix *Cogitata metaphysica*, is an

⁶GEBHARDT ed., vol. I, p. 408.

⁷MIGNINI ed., p. 99.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 98.

⁹Cf. *ibid.*, p. 99: “*Spinoza decide di rifondere la materia della Korte Verhandeling in un nuovo ordine; redige la duplice serie numerica (fine 1661-inizio 1662) e comincia a scrivere l’Ethica.*” (Roman characters by MIGNINI.)

¹⁰“*In wichtigen Punkten stimmt die Ethik mit der Kurzen Abhandlung über, die sich zum späteren Werk wie die Knospe zur Blüte verhält, weshalb sie als ‘Ur-Ethik’ bezeichnet werden konnte.*” (RÖD, pp. 36–37, highlighting by RÖD.) J. FREUDENTHAL is essentially of the same opinion: “*Der Traktat verhält sich zur Ethik Spinozas wie ein eilig erbautes, unansehnliches Häuschen zu einem nach festen Plan eines großen Meisters errichteten prachtvollen Palast. ... In ihr (scil. the Korte Verhandeling) finden wir die Hauptzüge seines Systems, das im Laufe der Jahre vielfache Umwandlungen erfahren hat, dessen metaphysische Grundlage jedoch alle Zeit unverändert geblieben ist.*” (FREUDENTHAL 1977, *Erster Teil*, pp. 101–102.) C. GEBHARDT remarks in respect of the philosophical dependability of the *Korte verhandeling* that “*Immerhin wird sich bei genauer Prüfung doch wohl ergeben, daß der Text der Korte Verhandeling auch in der tertiären Quelle, in der er uns vorliegt, keineswegs so völlig verdorben ist, wie er gilt, daß doch in einer Reihe von Fällen der überlieferte Text durchaus dem Verständnis genügt ...*” (GEBHARDT ed., vol. I, p. 436; roman characters by GEBHARDT.)

introduction into contemporary philosophy to the instruction of a Leiden theology student, SPINOZA'S resident friend in Rijnsburg. It expounds, in a broad conception, the Cartesian principles, with which SPINOZA, parallelly working on the *Korte verhandeling* and part I of the *Ethica*, on many essential metaphysical points no longer identified.¹¹ Thus, in the interpretation of his mature philosophy, we refer to it only when it philosophically harmonizes with the late system. Although SPINOZA'S characteristic metaphysical tendencies are, at points, perceivably present in it, it is also different from the *Ethica* in such fundamental aspects as the theory of substance (created cogitative things are also regarded as substances), the theses of the freedom of God and of the human will, respectively, etc.

The lengthy epistle *OP* № XXXIV (GEBHARDT XXI) written to W. BLYENBERGH does not carry a date but BLYENBERGH'S response to it assigns it to 28 February 1665. SPINOZA examines here the problematic relationship between the authority of Scripture and the *lumen naturalis intellectus*, as well as makes important statements about the theory of soul, etc.

As far as his *opus magnum*, the *Ethica*, is concerned, SPINOZA had probably started work on part I as early as 1662, and elaborated on the whole dissertation for more than a decade until he finalized the entire text by summer 1675.¹² Though the manuscript of the *Ethica* was thus ready for publication by then, SPINOZA decided to postpone its publishing, ultimately, beyond his death, as he foresaw he would suffer political persecution for it.¹³ Hence, the full Latin text of the *Ethica*, incorporated in the *Opera posthuma*, came out only posthumously, two and a half years later (December 1677) in Amsterdam, simultaneously with a highly precise Dutch translation entitled, *De nagelate schriften*, by J. H. GLAZEMAKER.¹⁴ As is known, part I, *On God (De Deo)*, of the *Ethica* contains the essence of SPINOZA'S mature theology and doctrine of substance, while part II, *On the Nature and Origin of the Mind (De natura et origine mentis)*, is our major systematic source on his definitive theory of the human mind.

¹¹With respect to the broad conception of SPINOZA'S presentation, and to his philosophical relation toward Cartesian dogma, cf. LODEWIJK MEYER'S remark in the *Praefatio* of the book: "*Cum enim discipulum suum Cartesii Philosophiam docere promississet, religio ipsi fuit, ab ejus sententiae latum unguem discedere, aut quid, quod ejus dogmatibus aut non responderet, aut contrarium esset, dictare. Quamobrem judicet nemo, illum hic, aut sua, aut tantum ea, quae probat, docere. Quamvis enim quaedam vera judicet, quaedam de suis addita fateatur; multa tamen occurrunt, quae tanquam falsa rejicit, & a quibus longe diversam fovet sententiam.*" (GEBHARDT ed., vol. I, pp. 131–132; underlining added.) In other words, SPINOZA was neither exclusively following DESCARTES, nor exclusively propounding his own philosophy, which makes it a text difficult to use in a historical aspect.

¹²Cf. FREUDENTHAL 1977, *Erster Teil*, p. 122; RÖD, p. 40.

¹³W. SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN offers us the following presentation of the troubled political situation, and SPINOZA'S position in it, in the Netherlands of the 1670s: "... schon 1672 begann seine Außenseiterposition nahezu unerträglich zu werden; Jan de Witt wurde ermordet, die Oranier und die orthodoxen Calvinisten kamen zur Herrschaft und der Krieg der Niederlande mit England und Frankreich ruinierte das Land. Die monarchistisch kirchliche Interessenlage der neuen Obrigkeiten ließ keinen Freiraum übrig für religionskritische und politische Grundsatzdiskussionen." (SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN 1977, p. 10.)

¹⁴Cf. GEBHARDT ed., vol. II, p. 315 and see bibliography under (GLAZEMAKER).

Last, SPINOZA's epistle *OP XXI* (GEBHARDT LXXIII) to Henry OLDENBURG, then secretary of the Royal Society in London, was written as a reply to a letter of OLDENBURG's certainly after 15 November but before 16 December 1675, which was the date of OLDENBURG's counter-reply. In this epistle, SPINOZA answered some queries of OLDENBURG's concerning a couple of difficult theological and even Christological points related to SPINOZA's anonymously published *Tractatus theologico-politicus* (1670).

In the context of our study, a philosophical analysis of our hermeneutical problem, i.e., the proper interpretation of Spinozism with respect to the *anima mundi* theory, has to depart more or less naturally from SPINOZA's respective, general and specific definitions of *soul*. So, on the basis of the above-presented texts, we shall try to reconstruct, first, SPINOZA's general theory of soul, then his specific theory of the human mind, *mens humana* (Section 2). After that, we will discuss his concept of God in the hope of ultimately showing that it is philosophically incompatible with the *anima mundi*-theory properly so called (Section 3). Finally, under the two subsequent points (Sections 4 and 5), we are going to present and philosophically analyze how a grand author, P. BAYLE, argued for the allegedly essential philosophical connection between Spinozism and the *anima mundi*-theory. The opposed position of J. G. WACHTER, who, although not well known today was, in his day, important, will be discussed under Section 6, followed by an examination of LEIBNIZ's reaction in Section 7. The further perspective of our investigation will include the discussion of HEMSTERHUIS's (Section 8) and LESSING's (Sections 11 and 12) respective alleged Spinozism and relation to the *anima mundi*-theory.

First of all, then, we examine SPINOZA's general conception of the soul as it is recorded and elaborated in the early *Korte verhandeling*. This text, in particular, presents a *general* theory of soul as well, unlike part II of the *Ethica*, which concentrates specifically on the concept of the human mind. In the second appendix, *Van de menschelyke ziel*, of the *Korte verhandeling*, SPINOZA gives the following main general definition of soul:

(9) Hence, *the being/essence of the soul consists only in that there is an idea, i.e., an objective being/essence, in the thinking attribute. This idea comes to be from the being/essence of an object which really exists in nature.*¹⁵

This definition is general in that according to SPINOZA, not only spatially extended bodies, but absolutely all other *modi* of the infinite attributes of the numerically one, actually existing substance are vested with their respective 'souls', and this definition logically-semantically embraces each of them. Further, this definition concerns the "*wezen*" of soul: this term, to judge by the rest of the text, should mean either *esse* or *essentia* in Latin, of which the second seems more probable here.

¹⁵“(9) Ergo dan zo bestaat het wezen van de ziel alleen hier in, namelyk in het zyn van een Idea, of voorwerpelyk wezen, in de denkende eigenschap, ontstaande van het wezen eenes voorwerps, 't welk in der daad in de Natuur wezentlyk is.” (second appendix: *Van de menschelyke ziel*; MIGNINI ed., p. 360. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting by SPINOZA.) We conserve the parenthesized numeration of the paragraphs, added by J. MONNIKHOFF to manuscript copy B of the *Korte verhandeling*. Throughout our citations from MIGNINI's edition of the *Korte verhandeling*, we are referring to the page numbers in standard characters, displayed at the *bottom* of each page of his edition.

The 'soul' of a thing is essentially an *idea*, i.e., a piece of representative knowledge in the infinite attribute of *cogitatio* of the numerically one divine substance. This idea is philosophically determined as a *voorwerpelyk wezen* (*objective being* or *essence*), which refers to intramental being. In contemporary ontology, *being* can be considered *formally*, *objectively* and *eminently*. Whatever is *formaliter* is considered as it is in itself (*in ipsis*) in extramental being, while whatever is *eminenter* is considered as far as it is potentially present in its cause (God) – a more perfect grade of being. In a sense, the category of *objective* being mediates between the other two since it denotes the thing as it is comprehended in the representative idea a mind has of it. Hence, it denotes the thing under a cognitive aspect, as it appears to a subject, “*quatenus est in idea*”.¹⁶ Therefore, once SPINOZA'S general metaphysical intuitions are accepted, it will appear logical that the soul or idea, conceived as a representation, is part of the infinite attribute of cognizant cogitation of God. At the same time, it *originates* from the *wezen* (again, *esse* or *essentia*, but probably the latter) of a really existing (*wezentlyk*; *existens* in the *Ethica*) object (*voorwerp*).

In respect of the *pananimistic* interpretation of Spinozism, perhaps the most important qualification of this concept of soul is the universality or universal presence of soul in all the attributes of the one infinite substance. As we have just suggested, SPINOZA explicitly affirms that not only the several different *modi* of the attribute of *extensio* (*uytgebreidheid*) have a soul, but so do all really existing (“*dadelyk wezentlyk*”) modes (“*wyzingen*”) of any attribute of the universal substance whatever. Thus, only non-existence is void of ‘soul’:

(9) *I am saying »of an object which really exists in nature« etc. without any further specifications in order to refer not only to the modes of extension but also to those of every infinite attribute, which, just like extension, have a soul.*¹⁷

The better-known statement, which we cited in the first paragraph of the present point, from the *scholium* of proposition XIII of part II of the *Ethica*, is to the same effect (for a clarification of the terminological discrepancy between *ziel*, soul and *mens*, mind see below, under [Section 2](#)):

... those things which we have proved hitherto *concerning mind* are altogether general, nor do they refer more to man than to other individuals, all of which are animate, although in different degrees. For of everything there necessarily exists in God an idea of which He is the cause ...¹⁸

¹⁶ *Renati Des Cartes Principiorum philosophiae Pars I, & II, More Geometrico demonstratae per Benedictum de Spinoza Amstelodamensem; pars I, definitio III* (GEBHARDT ed., vol. I, p. 150 = p. 10 of the original edition).

¹⁷“(9) Ik zeg van een voorwerp dat dadelyk wezentlyk (‘*existans*’ in the *Ethica*) is, enz. zonder meer *bezogonderheid*, om dan hier onder te begrypen niet alleen de *wyzingen* (scil. the *modi*) van de *uytgebreidheid*, maar ook de *wyzingen* van alle de *oneyndige eygenschappen*, de welke mede, zoo wel als de *uytgebreidheid*, een *ziele hebben*.” (Korte *verhandeling*, second appendix: *Van de menschelyke ziel*; MIGNINI ed., p. 360. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting by SPINOZA.)

¹⁸“... *ea, quae hucusque ostendimus, admodum communia sunt, nec magis ad hominis, quam ad reliqua Individua pertinent, quae omnia, quamvis diversis gradibus, animata tamen sunt. Nam cujuscunque rei datur in Deo idea, cujus Deus est causa ...*” ((JELLES and RIEUWERTSZ, eds.), p. 52; underlining added. English transl. by WHITE and STIRLING, p. 378.)

As we learn from part I of the *Ethica*,¹⁹ God, by virtue of His absolute, productive infinity, has an infinite number of manifestative attributes, only two of which (*extensio* and *cogitatio*) are accessible with their specific modes to human cognition. Given that, according to the *Korte verhandelng*, all modes (*wyzingen*) of all attributes (*eigenschappen*) of the infinite being have a *soul*, it appears reasonable to argue that as long as the physical world is viewed *intellectu* (in a metaphysically true perspective),²⁰ every existing thing will have a soul or idea and that, consequently, no existing thing should be considered dead but absolutely all is alive. SPINOZA proposes this apparently vitalistic thesis in his February 1665 epistle to BLYENBERGH, in the frame of the methodological distinction he sets up between representation through the imagination and representation through the intellect, as follows:

As you are saying that I render human beings similar to the elements, herbs, and stones when I make them depend on God so much, you sufficiently prove that you have thoroughly misunderstood my opinion and that you are applying the characteristics of the intellect to the imagination. Had you perceived with pure intellectual intuition what it means to depend on God, you certainly would not think that the things, in so far as they depend on God, are dead, corporeal and imperfect ... On the contrary, you would understand that they are perfect precisely because of their dependence on God, and in so far as they depend on God.²¹

Part I of the *Ethica* and SPINOZA's letter to OLDENBURG seem philosophically to reinforce this vitalistic statement as they declare that the natural world, or even the universe of all existing things, *is and moves in God*, the source of all life. SPINOZA here alludes to ST. PAUL's discourse in Acts 17:28 where the apostle, in an effort of evangelization, may have gone too far in a doctrinal respect in search of an analogy between the Christian concept of God and Stoic theology, dominant in the Athens of the epoch. But, in any case, SPINOZA, for his part, is aware that he affirms the

¹⁹Cf. *Ethica*, pars I, *propositio* XI: “*Deus, sive substantia constans infinitis attributis, quorum unumquodque aeternam, & infinitam essentiam exprimit, necessario existit.*” (Cf. also *propositio* XVI, *demonstratio*.)

²⁰Discursive rational understanding (*secundi generis cognitio*), based on adequate ideas, takes logical precedence over cognition by imagination, a kind of *cognitio primi generis*; cf. *Ethica*, pars II, *propositio* XL, *scholium* II: “*Ex omnibus supra dictis, clare apparet, nos multa percipere, & notiones universales formare I°. ex singularibus ... II°. Ex signis ... Utrumque hunc res contemplandi modum cognitionem primi generis, opinionem, vel imaginationem in posterum vocabo. III°. Denique ex eo, quod notiones communes, rerumque proprietatum ideas adaequatas habemus; ... atque hunc rationem, & secundi generis cognitionem vocabo.*” (JELLES and RIEUWERTSZ, eds.), p. 78.) Cf. also the fourfold classification of the genera of cognition in the *Tractatus de intellectus emendatione*, (JELLES and RIEUWERTSZ, eds.), pp. 362–363.

²¹“*Quod vero ais, me homines, eos a Deo tam dependentes faciendo, ideo elementis, herbis, & lapidibus similes reddere, id sufficienter ostendit te meam opinionem perversissime intelligere, & res, quae intellectum spectant, cum imaginatione confundere. Si enim puro intellectu percipisses, quid sit a Deo dependere, certe non cogitares, res, quatenus a Deo dependent, mortuas, corporeas, & imperfectas esse, (...) econtra caperes, ea de causa, & quatenus a Deo dependent, perfectas esse.*” (JELLES and RIEUWERTSZ, eds.), p. 502. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting added.)

world 'to be and to move in God' in a sense different from Pauline, and in general ancient, theology:

*For I assert that God is, as they say, the immanent cause of everything and not a transitive cause. Together with St. Paul and perhaps all ancient philosophers I affirm that everything is and moves in God, though in a different sense ...*²²

The specifically Spinozan modality of this proposition results from his doctrine of substance. The statement that the world is situated *in* God analytically follows from SPINOZA'S concept of God as the ontologically self-sufficient, infinite and infinitely productive, numerically one substance, as well as from that of finite things as ontologically dependent, proximate or secondary modes of this substance. God is, hence, no extramundane entity but the immanent efficient and material cause of the essence and existence of all individual, immediate and secondary *modi*.

On this metaphysical foundation the *Cogitata metaphysica* may help us combine and interpret the theses that all is animate, and that the world is in God. SPINOZA, there, defines life in general terms as the power or force (*vis*) by which things persevere in existence. This force, in finite things, does not coincide with their respective essences, whereas it does in God, so God *is* life by Its essence, and nothing is life except God. Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that, for SPINOZA, all is animate *because* all is topologically-materially in God, the only self-sufficient source of *life*. In other words, the life of finite individual things is, in this case, the ontological sustaining power of God, which operates in them by virtue of their being topologically in God:

*For this reason, we construe life as the force whereby things persist in their being. And since that force is different from the things themselves, we say properly that the things have life. The force whereby God persists in his being is nothing but his essence. Therefore, whoever calls God 'life' speaks most aptly. There are theologians who think that the Jews, when taking an oath, said יהוה חי, i.e., 'the living God' and not יהוה חיה, i.e., 'the life of God' precisely because of this, namely, because God is life ...*²³

²²"*Deum enim rerum omnium causam immanentem, ut ajunt, non vero transeuntem statuo. Omnia, inquam, in Deo esse, and in Deo moveri cum Paulo affirmo, & forte etiam cum omnibus antiquis Philosophis, licet alio modo ...*" (Epistle OP XXI, GEBHARDT LXXIII, to H. OLDENBURG, late November–early December 1675; (JELLES and RIEUWERTSZ, eds.), p. 449. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) Cf. also *Ethica*, pars I, propositio XV: "*Quicquid est, in Deo est, & nihil sine Deo esse, neque concipi potest. Demonstratio. Praeter Deum nulla datur, neque concipi potest substantia, (...) hoc est (...) res, quae in se est, & per se concipitur. Modi autem (...) sine substantia nec esse, nec concipi possunt; quare hi in sola divina natura esse, & per ipsam solam concipi possunt. Atqui praeter substantias, & modos nil datur. (...) Ergo nihil sine Deo esse, neque concipi potest. Q. E. D.*" ((JELLES and RIEUWERTSZ, eds.), pp. 12–13; roman parentheses, containing cross-references, by SPINOZA.)

²³"*Quare nos per vitam intelligimus vim, per quam res in suo esse perseverant. Et quia illa vis a rebus ipsis est diversa, res ipsas habere vitam proprie dicimus. Vis autem, qua Deus in suo esse perseverat, nihil est praeter ejus essentiam, unde optime loquuntur, qui Deum vitam vocant. Nec desunt Theologi, qui sentiunt, Judaeos hac de causa, nempe quod Deus sit vita, & a vita non distinguatur, cum jurabant, dixisse יהוה חי vivus Jehova; non vero יהוה חיה vita Jehovae ...*" (GEBHARDT ed., vol. I, p. 260. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting by SPINOZA.)

To sum it all up, every finite thing has a *soul* (understood as an idea conveying representative knowledge of the thing), is in a specific sense *alive* (*animata*) and is topologically situated *within* God, upon whom it depends as a mode depends on its carrying substance, and by whose pervasive power it perseveres in existence and has its life.

We said above, however, that soul is, in more specific terms, *representative* knowledge, which takes the form of an idea. What do we mean here by *representative*? Well, *ziel* or soul is, first and foremost, the proximate *modus* of the divine attribute of cogitation, which, in the specific case of the human being, subsumes such secondary modes as love, desire, happiness etc. (it is *de alderonmiddelykste wyzing van de eigenschap die wy denking noemen*).²⁴ Thus, the soul, whether of a human or any other being, is part and parcel of God's infinite attribute. But, at the same time, says SPINOZA, it *originates from* the individual body associated with it. So as far as the *general* concept of the soul is concerned, SPINOZA affirms that the soul is metaphysically subordinate to, and dependent on, its body: it is no more than a *representation* of the changing internal conditions of the body:

(7) ... now taking into consideration that the idea derives from the essence of the object, it must gradually change or cease to be according as the object changes or ceases to be. If this is so, the idea is that which is united with the object.²⁵

The soul is, therefore, an idea in the specific sense that it is *representative* knowledge or information *of* the particular body to which it is linked, and so the essence of the soul of a particular thing is nothing but the idea of that thing within the infinite attribute of cogitation, of the unique divine substance.²⁶ The soul, as far as it is considered *in general*, entertains not a reciprocal but a non-convertible relationship with the body to which it belongs. It is a representative idea in the specific sense that it is knowledge representative of, and unilaterally *determined* by, the body:

(8) Finally, if we wanted ... to ascribe to the essence of the soul that which the souls could exist by, we would not find anything else but the attribute and the object of which we have just spoken. However, none of these can belong to the essence of the soul because the object

²⁴Cf. *Korte verhandeling*, second appendix, *Van de menschelyke ziel*, point (7); MIGNINI ed., p. 358 (not a literal citation).

²⁵“(7) ... Nu dan, aangezien de Idea voortkomt van de wezentlykheid des voorwerps, zoo moet dan ook het voorwerp, veranderende of vernietigende, de zelve Idea na graden veranderen of vernietigen, en dit zoo zynde, zoo is zy dat geen, 't welk vereenigt is met het voorwerp.” (*Ibid.*, transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting by SPINOZA. An alternative translation of the first part of the text is: “... taking into consideration that the idea derives from the essence of the object, the object must gradually change or annihilate the idea according as the object changes or ceases to be.”)

²⁶Cf. *Korte verhandeling*, second appendix, *Van de menschelyke ziel*: “(7) ... En dien volgende zoo en kanner (!) in de denkende eigenschap geen andere wyzing gegeven worden, de welke zoude behooren tot het wezen van de ziel eenes iegelyken dings, als alleen de Idea, welke noodzakelyk van zulk een dink, wezentlyk zynde, moet zyn in de denkende eigenschap: want zoodanig een Idea sleept met zich de overige wyzingen van liefde, begeerte, enz.” (MIGNINI ed., p. 358; highlighting by SPINOZA.)

*does not partake in cogitation and is really different from the soul. As concerns the attribute, we have already demonstrated that it can not belong to the above-named essence ... because the attribute qua attribute is not united with the object, in so far as it neither changes nor ceases to be when the object changes or ceases to be.*²⁷

In this passage, a philosophical difficulty is caused by the stipulation that the body is a *modus* really different from the soul, “*van de Ziel dadelyk onderscheiden word*”. This is not to be taken to annihilate logically the substantial identity of body and soul, a thesis proposed earlier in the same appendix²⁸ as well as in the *Ethica*.²⁹ In this paragraph, SPINOZA situates the soul in a metaphysical middle position, as it were, between the body and God. This seems a philosophical preparation for the *specific* definition of the soul (i.e., of human mind) inasmuch as human mind will prove to be a particular thing *not fully* determined by the body, but also partaking of true freedom, *waare Vryheid*, through perfect cognition achieved by clear and distinct ideas, the philosophical guarantors of the *active*, i.e., free character of the soul. But this is the topic of our following point, [Section 2](#).

When all is said and done, SPINOZA'S *general* concept of the soul boils down to that of a thing which is universally present in the infinite attributes of the one divine substance (*pananimism*). The soul is essentially an *idea*, i.e., representative knowledge in the intellect of God, whereby God has information of the condition of the particular body and which is, therefore, *determined* by the body belonging to it, to a great extent though not fully, even in the case of the human being. The soul thus conceived is supposed by SPINOZA to *spirate life* into the body by virtue of being topologically situated in God whereby it can persevere in existence. We shall see under the following point how this applies to the specific case of the human mind.

²⁷“(8) Eyndelyk, indien wy zouden willen ... aan het wezen van de Ziel toeschryven dat geene, door het welke zy ⟨scil. de zielen⟩ wezentlyk zouden kunnen zyn, men zoude niet anders kunnen vinden als die eigenschap, en het voorwerp van de welke wy nu gesproken hebben, en geen van deze en kan behoren an 't wezen van de Ziel, aangezien het voorwerp van de denking niets en heeft, en van de Ziel dadelyk onderscheiden word. En de eigenschap aangaande: wy hebben nu ook al bewezen datze ⟨!⟩ tot het voorgenoemde wezen niet en kan behoren; ... want de eigenschap als eigenschap en is niet vereenigt met het voorwerp, dewyl ze noch verandert noch vernietigt, alschoon het voorwerp veranderd off vernietigt.” (Korte verhandeling, second appendix, *Van de menschelyke ziel*; MIGNINI ed., *ibid.* Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting by SPINOZA.)

²⁸Earlier in the same appendix, under point (3), SPINOZA says that “... syne ⟨scil. of the soul; *ziel* is used as a masculine noun here⟩ *verandering (alleen) afhangt van het lichaam ('t welk by my is de vereeniging van ziel en lichaam)...*” (MIGNINI ed., p. 356.)

²⁹Cf. *Ethica*, pars III, *propositio* II (see below, under [Section 3](#)).

2 SPINOZA'S Specific Definition of the Soul in the *Korte verhandeling* and *Ethica* I–II (1663–1675): the Case of the Human Mind, *mens humana*. The Role of the Ideas as Mediators Between the Infinite Intellect, and the Finite Minds. Philosophical Parallelism with FICINO'S *Theologia Platonica*

SPINOZA'S *specific* definition of soul concerns human mind, although in the *Korte verhandeling* he continues to apply the general term *ziel* even to mind, whereas the *Ethica* consistently uses *mens* for '(human) mind'. The explanation for this singular terminological discrepancy may lie with a lexicological aspect of the seventeenth-century Dutch language. As Pieter BALLING, the translator into Dutch of SPINOZA'S *Renati Des Cartes Principiorum philosophiae Pars I, & II, More Geometrico demonstratae* (first Latin edition 1663, i.e., almost contemporary with the composition of the *Korte verhandeling*; Dutch version 1664) asserts, the then possible Dutch equivalents of the Latin term *mens* referred to several different *corporeal* conceptions of soul. BALLING, in a translator's note on definition VI (*Substantia*) of the first part of SPINOZA'S work, gives the following justification for not translating the term *mens*, but keeping it in the Dutch text:

*The specifications which Descartes couples up with this definition are met only by the word mens, which, in so far as it is not homonymous in Latin and does not refer to anything corporeal, expresses his opinion more clearly. But in our language in which we do not find any word that does not refer to something corporeal too, the one word would not express what we mean more clearly than the other, and so it would be in vain to translate it here.*³⁰

Hence, it seems reasonable to suggest that we have to take the expression *menschenlijke ziel* to mean 'human mind' in a Dutch context in SPINOZA.

Returning to SPINOZA'S *specific* definition of the soul, we can now examine his position (proposed in the appendix *Van de menschelyke ziel* of the *Korte verhandeling*) that *human mind* is the idea correlated to the extended object which is human body. His discussion of this concept relies upon his theory of substance here, in accordance with which the only principle of individuation applicable in the case of extended objects is motion or rest: a particular body (*lichaam*) is essentially a characteristic proportion (a specific formula) of motion and rest, describing the relationship among the parts of that body. So, a *human mind* is the idea or piece of (not fully) determined representative knowledge, which is of a particular human body in

³⁰“‘t Geen Des Cartes by deze bepaling voegt, komt alleenlijk op 't Woort Mens aan, twelk om dat het niet gelijknamig in 't Latijn, noch iet dat lichaamljk is betekent, zijn mening te klaarder uyt-drukt: maar in onze taal daar wy geen zulk woort, dat niet te gelijk iet dat lichameljk is betekent, vinden, zou 't eene woort de meening niet klaarder uyt-drukken dan 't ander, en dus waart (sic) te vergeefs dat hier te vertalen.” (*Renati Des Cartes Principiorum philosophiae Pars I, & II, More Geometrico demonstratae per Benedictum de Spinoza Amstelodamensem*. Amstelodami, Apud J. Riewerts, 1663; *Pars I, Definitiones*. GEBHARDT ed., vol. I, p. 150 = p. 10 of the original edition. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

the infinite attribute of cogitation of God, and which, consequently, constantly and proportionally changes, according to the (internal and external) motion and condition of that body:

... so that the human body is nothing but a specific proportion of motion and rest.

(15) *The objective essence* (scil. the idea), then, which is of this essential proportion in the thinking attribute is (so we argue) the soul of the body. So when one of these two modes increases or decreases, the idea also changes accordingly, by degrees ...³¹

Naturally, however, the *idea* that is a particular human mind is, at the same time, also a consciousness or a self, which is constituted through the repetitive appearance of different sense perceptions, with gradually accumulated experience leading to ratiocination and self-knowledge. Yet again, this individual consciousness is a constitutive and manifestative part of the *infinita idea Dei* (cf. *Ethica* II, proposition VIII), which is an infinite immediate mode of the attribute of thought. The finite mind, in this specific manner, merges into and is one with the infinite mind, though it is only one of its proximate *modi*. Thus, the idea, which is the human mind, in a way mediates between the body and the infinite intellect in that it is a representative effect of the body *to the same extent* as it is a manifestation of the divine intellect:

(17) *Finally, since we have explained what sensation is, we can see easily how from this, a returning idea emerges, i.e., self-acquaintance, experience and reasoning. And from all this (and also because our soul is united with God and is a part of the infinite idea which comes to be immediately from God), the origin of clear knowledge can be seen clearly, as well as the immortality of the souls.*³²

Part II of the *Ethica*, a more systematic elaboration on the theory of the human mind, essentially reinforces, in geometrically stringent form and with more detail, the doctrine of the *Korte verhandeling* as expounded in its second appendix, and in its *Tweede Deel, van de Mensch*, in general. Thus, the demonstration of proposition XIX specifies that: “*The human mind is the idea itself or the knowledge of the human body ... This knowledge ... is in God, in so far as He is considered as affected by another idea of an individual thing.*”³³ An individual human mind is

³¹“(14) ... alsoo dat dan het menschelyk lichaam niet anders is, als een sekere proportie van beweginge en stilte. (15) Het voorwerpelyke wezen (scil. de Idea), dan, ‘t welk van dese wezentlyke proportie is in de denkende eigenschap, dat (zeggen wy) is de ziele van ‘t lichaam. Zo wanneer nu een van deze twee wyzingen of in meer of in min (beweginge of stilte) veranderen, zo verandert zig ook na graden de Idea ...” (*Korte verhandeling*, second appendix, *Van de menschelyke ziel*; MIGNINI ed., p. 362. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting by SPINOZA.)

³²“(17) Eyndelyk dan, dewyle wy nu verklaart hebben, wat het gevoel is, zo kunnen wy lichtelyk zien, hoe hier uyt komt te ontstaan een weerkeryge Idea, off de kennisse syns zelfs, de ervaring en redenering. En ook uyt alle deze (gelyk ook omdat onze ziel vereenigt is met God, en een deel is van de oneyndige Idea, van God onmiddelyk ontstaande) kan klaarlyk gezien worden den oorspronk van de klare kennisse, en de onsterfelykheid der ziele.” (*Ibid.*, p. 364. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting by SPINOZA.)

³³“*Mens enim humana est ipsa idea, sive cognitio Corporis humani, ... quae ... in Deo quidem est, quatenus alia rei singularis idea affectus consideratur ...*” (*Ethica*, pars II, proposition XIX, *demonstratio*; (JELLES and RIEUWERTSZ, eds.), p. 64. English transl. by WHITE and STIRLING, p. 382.)

a particular piece of knowledge (*cognitio*) that is part of the infinite divine intellect (which is, in turn, *in* the attribute of cogitation), about an individual human body. The corollary of proposition XI of the second part propounds perhaps most explicitly the characteristically Spinozistic doctrine that the particular human mind, viewed as an *idea*, is part of the infinite intellect of God, while the attribute of cogitation, as an efficient cause, constitutes the essence of the individual human mind as well as the whole of all minds or ideas, the infinite intellect of God. Although as a rule GLAZEMAKER translates *explicare* by *verklaren*, i.e., *explain* (so also in the Dutch translation of the following passage), one sometimes has the impression on reading the *Ethica* that the meaning in which SPINOZA used the Latin term '*explicare*' has more to do with its etymological sense 'to unroll, unfold, spread out (as an explicitation or exemplification of sg.)'.³⁴ If this is true, then we may say that, for SPINOZA, particular human minds are like finite exemplifications of the divine intellect. Yet, however this Latin word is interpreted, SPINOZA'S following pivotal statement asserts, in any case, that particular minds are in a part-whole relationship with the infinite intellect of God:

*Hence it follows that the human mind is a part of the infinite intellect of God, and therefore, when we say that the human mind perceives this or that thing, we say nothing else than that God has this or that idea; not indeed in so far as He is infinite, but in so far as He is manifested (explicatur) through the nature of the human mind, or in so far as He forms the essence of the human mind ...*³⁵

Hence, the representative cognition that is the individual human mind is a constitutive part of the infinite idea or intellect, which, in turn, obtains an idea of each individual perception of each finite mind through being essentially united with them. So, though my idea of a particular (external or internal) perception is, to be sure, part of my intellect (*pars mei*), it is nevertheless part of God's intellect (itself a *modus* of the infinite substance) as well, in the same ontological manner. In other words, the *ideas* that are the individual human minds necessarily convey the *ideas* of their individual perceptions to the divine intellect. Hence, the ideas resulting from perception, which are thus ultimately (topologically) in God, function as

³⁴On the metaphysical interpretation and significance of the Spinozan term '*explicare*', see DELEUZE, pp. 11–14, who analyzes this term together with the semantically related terms '*ostendere*' and '*involvere*'. Cf. also how BRETON explains the metaphysical meaning of the term: "... *c'est pourquoi le terme 'explicare' est si précieux: il suggère le déploiement d'une puissance qui rayonne en une infinité d'infinis (attributs et modes) sous sa seule pression d'infinité.*" (BRETON 1977, *Introduction*, p. 10.)

³⁵"*Hinc sequitur Mentem humanam partem esse infiniti intellectus Dei; ac proinde cum dicimus, Mentem humanam hoc, vel illud percipere, nihil aliud dicimus, quam quod Deus, non quatenus infinitus est, sed quatenus per naturam humanae Mentis explicatur, sive quatenus humanae Mentis essentiam constituit, hanc vel illam habet ideam ...*" (*Ethica*, *pars* II, *propositio* XI, *corollarium*; (JELLES and RIEUWERTSZ, eds.), p. 50, underlining added. English transl. by WHITE and STIRLING, p. 377.) Cf. also proposition XLIII, *scholium*, *ad fin.*: "... *Mens nostra, quatenus res vere percipit, pars est infiniti Dei intellectus ...*" ((JELLES and RIEUWERTSZ, eds.), pp. 80–81). Needless to say, SPINOZA also uses the term *explicare* in its derived meaning 'to explain'; cf., e.g., *Cogitata metaphysica*, *pars* II, *caput* XII: *De Mente Humana* etc.

instruments or channels of communication (or better, communion), through which human minds maintain a sort of contact with the divine mind, the original and primordial depository of all ideas of perception. In this manner, the individual ideas of clear and distinct perception enable the finite minds to form an idea of the infinite substance (every clear perception involves an understanding of the divine essence),³⁶ as they likewise enable the infinite intellect to obtain ideas of the finite minds. Logically, however, the ideas resulting from perception, all of them clear and distinct in the infinite mind, can *lose* their clearness and distinctness when (and only when) viewed from the direction of a particular human mind:

*All ideas are in God ... and in so far as they are related to God are true ... and ... adequate. No ideas, therefore, are inadequate or confused unless in so far as they are related to the individual mind of some person ...*³⁷

Therefore, says SPINOZA, it is the (ethical) task of finite minds to strive to obtain more and more perfect ideas of perception as a more and more perfect, i.e., clear and distinct, idea implies a proportionally higher degree of activity and, thereby, of freedom as well. Man can thus participate in the freedom of God, which is only internally-intrinsically determined by the organic, eternal and unchangeable nature of God itself.

But in metaphysical terms, more and more perfect ideas of perception, i.e., a higher and higher degree of true understanding of the essences of things, brings about the mystical climax of SPINOZA'S philosophy of mind as well, inasmuch as the degree of perfection of the human intellect is proportional with the true knowledge it has of God: "*to perfect the intellect is nothing but to understand God, together with the attributes and actions of God*".³⁸ A true knowledge of God is, in turn, nothing but the identity of my ideas of God with Its own, as it were, archetypal ideas of Itself: when my ideas of the essence, attributes and actions of God are

³⁶On account of the finite minds' epistemological and ontological dependence on God, W. SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN points out that "*Da die Natur der Wahrheit in der göttlichen Natur dergestalt grundgelegt ist, daß jede Erkenntnis epistemologisch und ontologisch auf Gott angewiesen ist, läßt sich zunächst schließen, daß das ein zureichender Grund für die theologische Suffizienz der Vernunft ist: alles, was für den Menschen erfahrbar ist, begreift diese Vernunft in Gott. Aus der Begründung, daß Gott notwendig für jede intuitive Erkenntnis vorausgesetzt werden müsse und zugleich und deshalb ontologisch in allem existiere ..., schließt Spinoza, daß der Gottesbegriff vollständig die Erkenntnis bestimme, und daß die Erkenntnis zugleich das einzige Organ zur Perzeption Gottes sei.*" (SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN 1984, p. 70.)

³⁷"*Ideae omnes in Deo sunt; ... & quatenus ad Deum referuntur, sunt verae, ... & ... adaequatae; adeoque nullae inadequatae, nec confusae sunt; nisi quatenus ad singularem alicujus Mentem referuntur:...*" (*Ethica*, pars II, *propositio XXXVI, demonstratio; ibid.*, p. 74. SPINOZA'S cross-references have been omitted. English transl. by WHITE and STIRLING, p. 386.) Cf. also *pars V, propositio XXX*: "*Mens nostra, quatenus se, & Corpus sub aeternitatis specie cognoscit, eatenus Dei cognitionem necessario habet, scitque se in Deo esse, & per Deum concipi.*" ((JELLES and RIEUWERTSZ, eds.), p. 255.)

³⁸"... *intellectum perficere nihil aliud est, quam Deum, Deique attributa, & actiones, ... intelligere.*" (*Ethica*, pars IV, *Appendix, caput IV*; (JELLES and RIEUWERTSZ, eds.), p. 223. English transl. by WHITE and STIRLING, p. 447.)

really clear and distinct, then all distinctive features have disappeared from them through which they could be differentiated from the eternal unchangeable ideas of the same objects, within the infinite intellect of God. It is in this epistemological modality that the immediate, i.e., complete, union of the individual human mind with God's mind (*intellectus Dei*) is supposed to take place by SPINOZA. The *onmiddelyke vereeniging met God* (the immediate union with God), the crowning ethical-metaphysical concept of the entire system of Spinozism is the result of an unwearying intellectual effort towards the perfection of human cognition, of an unceasing improvement of the intellect, of a '*verbetering van 't verstant'*':

(11) ... since the capacity in us which has to know God is the intellect and since the intellect is so immediately united with God that it can neither exist nor be understood without God, it becomes incontestably clear that nothing can be always so attached to the intellect as, precisely, God.

(12) Further, it is impossible to understand God by the mediation of something else ...³⁹

Parenthetically, there is a relatively far-reaching philosophical parallelism between this theory and FICINO's thesis in the *Theologia Platonica de Immortalitate Animorum* (1482), namely, that the individual human mind in the act of cognition acquires immediate spiritual cognizance of the essence of the object, the *ratio rei* or *idea*, which is, at the same time, the creative idea of the object as it is in the divine intellect, so that the human mind, by knowing the idea of the thing, gets an intellectual glimpse of the mind of God, which is the depository of all the ideas or essences of things. Thereby, argues FICINO much like SPINOZA, the individual human mind is substantially attached to the divine reason through the intellectual bond of the *idea*, and knows and is imbued with God so that, 'in an inscrutable manner', it effectively becomes part of God, '*evenit Deus*':

Because then the mind, after it has donned the idea, becomes the truth of the thing itself which has been created by virtue of that specific idea. ... since whoever properly contemplates some kind of things, at once receives into himself one or another of the ideas, the plenitude of which is the Divine Understanding. ... And all Platonists demonstrate that when the reason principles are contemplated, the Divine Reason is touched upon by a real and not imaginary touch of the mind, and that the unity which is one's own mind couples up with God, the unity of all things, in some inscrutable manner.⁴⁰

³⁹“(11) ... aangezien dat geene in ons, 't welke God moet kennen, het Verstant is, en dat dat zelve zoo onmiddelyk met hem vereenigt is, dat het noch bestaan, noch verstaan kan worden zonder hem, zoo blykt daar uyt onwederspreekelyk, dat geen dink altoos zoo naa het verstand kan toegevoegt worden als eeven God zelve. (12) Het is ook onmogelyk door iets anders God te kennen verstaan ...” (*Korte verhandeling, Het Tweede Deel, van de Mensch en 't geen tot hem aanhorig is*, chapter XXIV: *Van Gods Liefde tot de Mensch*; MIGNINI ed., p. 332. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

⁴⁰“*Tunc enim mens ideam induta fit ipsa veritas rei illius quae per talem est ideam creata. ... quia scilicet quisquis vere contemplatur speciem aliquam rerum, accipit iam in se aliquam ex numero idearum: quarum plenitudo est ipsa divina ratio. ... Et Platonici omnes probant in rationibus contemplandis divinam rationem tactu quodam mentis substantiali potius quam imaginato tangi: unitatemque mentis propriam, deo rerum omnium unitati modo quodam inestimabili copulari.*”

In FICINO'S doctrine of the *copulatio mentis cum Deo* we might discover another version of the *epistemological mysticism* that culminates in the finite mind's intellectual union with God, which we have also identified as the crowning concept of SPINOZA'S theory of the human mind.⁴¹

As far as our investigation about the philosophical relationship between Spinozism and the *anima mundi*-theory is concerned, however, it has to be pointed out here that SPINOZA'S doctrine of the substantial union between the infinite mind and the finite minds may seem to exemplify a particular variant of the *anima mundi*-theory. By a philosophically mistaken simplification, SPINOZA'S doctrine can be reduced to the proposition that if the individual minds really merge with the divine mind substantially, then that mind, as the distributive unity of all individual minds, may be seen as the soul of the world, *if* it is correlated with the cosmos as its body. To believe ZAC, we may attribute this interpretation

(*Theologia Platonica de immortalitate animorum, liber XII, caput II: Questio prima de ascensu ad deum: quomodo mens in divinam elevatur ideam*; FICINO, p. 192 verso. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) See also *liber XIV, caput I (Quod anima nitatur deus fieri, ostendimus signis duodecim, secundum duodecim dei dotes)*: "... cum intellectus quaerat res omnes intelligere, et intelligendo formis earum penitus vestiatur, consequens est, ut quaerat res omnes effici, unde nititur Deus fieri, in quo sunt omnia, dum nititur omnia fieri." (*Ibid.*, pp. 223 verso-224 recto, etc.) On FICINO'S theory of the *anima mundi*, see *Theologia Platonica, liber IV, caput I, point 23 et passim*. In FICINO'S conception, the soul of the world occupies the highest position within the middle category of the fivefold hierarchy of being (*materia-qualitas-anima-angelus-Deus*). Within the category of Soul, the world soul ranks above the respective souls of the twelve astronomical spheres, which in turn take precedence over the individual human souls. Concerning FICINO'S possible historical influence on SPINOZA'S time and on SPINOZA'S philosophy itself, cf. FREUDENTHAL'S opinion about the intellectual climate to which the younger SPINOZA was exposed: "... Spinoza in einem Kreis lebte, dem pantheistische Lehren nicht fremd waren. Es wird ja auch berichtet, daß es um die Mitte des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts in Holland zahlreiche mystische Philosophen und Jacob Boehmisten gab, die mit derartigen Ansichten vertraut waren. Durch sie und durch die viel gelesenen Werke von Neuplatonikern der Renaissance, wie die Marsilius Ficinus', Picos von Mirandola, Taulers, Giordano Brunos u. a., werden die Keime des Pantheismus, die zuerst aus jüdischen Quellen Spinoza zugeführt worden waren, in seinem Geiste weiter entwickelt worden sein. Denn daß diese Schriften ihm sämtlich unbekannt geblieben seien, ist unwahrscheinlich." (FREUDENTHAL 1977, *Erster Teil*, p. 45.) On the systematic philosophical relatedness, as well as difference, of Spinozism and Hellenistic Neoplatonism (the metaphysics of PROCLUS), see BRETON 1973, especially pp. 220–222.

⁴¹ A very interesting essay which establishes philosophical links between the theological apex of SPINOZA'S metaphysics and seventeenth-century Christian mysticism, rational theology, and sapiential literature is W. SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN'S "Veritas particeps Dei. Der Spinozismus im Horizont mystischer und rationalistischer Theologie" (SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN 1984). Here, the author argues that, by virtue of a step-by-step evolution of the interpretation of fundamental Christian theological concepts, a deeper understanding of Spinozistic pantheism became possible by the early eighteenth century in Germany: "*Der Selbstauflösungsprozeß der Dogmatik in der Mystik des 17. Jahrhunderts ist zugleich die Genese des Verständnisrahmens für den Spinozismus. Die Christologie wird psychologisiert, die punktuellen Ereignisse individuellen Heils von Rechtfertigung und Gewissen strecken sich zur Zeitlosigkeit und Vernunft: Dann sind Vernunft, Natur und Gnade dasselbe; der Name dafür heißt Pantheismus.*" (SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN 1984, pp. 86–86.)

of Spinozism to LEIBNIZ'S *Considerations sur la doctrine d'un Esprit Universel Unique*.⁴²

We have said 'by a philosophical simplification' because it appears that for SPINOZA, actually not every human mind is entitled to enjoy the intellectual love towards, and the mystical union with, God. As both the *Ethica* and the *Korte verhandeling* stipulate, merely the minds of the wise can reach that highest beatitude. Further, it is an even more serious philosophical misunderstanding to think that for SPINOZA, the divine mind (*intellectus Dei*) is God *as such*. As SPINOZA puts it very clearly in, e.g., epistle OP № LXVI, the "*intellectus absolute infinitus*" is merely an immediate *modus* (part of the *natura naturata*) in the attribute of cogitation.⁴³ The *modi* are produced by God considered as an 'infinite infinity' (cf. *Ethica* I, def. VI), i.e., as the numerically unique substance consisting of an infinite number of attributes, each of them infinite in its kind. The infinite productive riches of the godhead, thus considered as the *natura naturans*, as the *cause* of all that there is, is never exhausted by a mode of one of its attributes.⁴⁴ The second component (concerning the correlation of the divine mind to the cosmos as its body) of the interpretation of Spinozism here examined also fails because of SPINOZA'S doctrine regarding the substantial identity of body and soul, as we shall see under the following Section 3.

To sum up, human mind, a specific exemplification of soul in general, is a not fully determined idea, i.e., piece of representative knowledge, part of the *intellectus Dei* (and so of the *natura naturata*), which is an infinite immediate mode in the infinite attribute of cogitation of the unique divine substance, the *natura naturans*, God considered as a cause. The immortality and at least partial freedom of human soul are related to this privileged position that it occupies in the divine mind, with which it is intellectually bound up by virtue of its clear and distinct ideas. We have, further, anticipated to some extent why it is philosophically impossible to maintain that

⁴²Cf. ZAC, pp. 89–90. ZAC here insinuates with the following words that LEIBNIZ referred to SPINOZA in the *Considerations sur la doctrine d'un Esprit Universel Unique*: "On s'éloigne encore de la vérité lorsqu'on rattache ce qu'on appelle l'«animisme» de Spinoza à je ne sais quelle thèse d'une 'Ame du monde', qui animerait toutes les parties de l'univers et soufflerait en elles «comme un même souffle de vent fait sonner différemment divers tuyaux d'orgue»", the last clause being a citation from LEIBNIZ'S *Considerations* ... in a passage where LEIBNIZ does in no way explicitly refer to SPINOZA. (Cf. GERHARDT ed. 1965, vol. VI, pp. 529 and 535; see also our Section 5 of Chapter 3 above.)

⁴³Epistle OP № LXVI (29 July 1675) is № LXIV in GEBHARDT. SPINOZA here responds to the following question, proposed by SCHULLER in epistle OP № LXV: "... eorum, quae a Deo immediate producta sunt, quaeque mediante infinita quadam modificatione producuntur, exempla desiderarem." SPINOZA'S answer is as well-known as it is significant: "... exempla, quae petis, primi generis sunt in Cogitatione, intellectus absolute infinitus; in Extensione autem motus & quies; secundi autem, facies totius universi, quae quamvis infinitis modis variet, manet tamen semper eadem ..." (JELLES and RIEUWERTSZ, eds.), pp. 591 and 593, respectively.) Cf. DE DIJN, *passim*.

⁴⁴On the fundamental metaphysical distinction between *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*, see *Ethica*, part I, proposition XXIX, schol. On the historical origin and polysemantic character of these two terms, see GUEROUlt, vol. I, *Appendice* № 13, pp. 564–568.

SPINOZA'S concept of God is that of an entity substantially identical with the totality of finite minds, and why it could not be identified with the world soul either. The full resolution of the query, however, belongs under the following point.

In more general terms, it appears that, for SPINOZA, the infinite, internal and organic riches of God involves that an infinite immediate mode of Its cogitative attribute is, as it were, a spiritual depository of the soul of every particular physical body in the universe, regardless of whether these are human bodies or not. Namely, all is 'animate' in the specific sense that the divine mind has an idea or cognition of every finite object (cf. part II, proposition XII, demonstr.),⁴⁵ which It sustains in existence as all such objects are topologically situated in it. A further analysis of SPINOZA'S concept of God as the single infinite substance will enable us to give a definitive solution to our initial problem concerning the alleged essential philosophical connection between SPINOZA'S theory of the soul and the *anima mundi* theory. Hence, at this point, we attempt a fundamental philosophical investigation of SPINOZA'S concept of God.

3 SPINOZA'S Concept of God as the Single Infinite Substance. The Philosophical Incompatibility of Spinozism with the *anima mundi*-Theory

First and foremost, for SPINOZA, God is no transeunt cause, and hence no extramundane entity, though It is still the *ultima ratio rerum*. Yet, albeit God is *causa immanens*, It has a specific ontological difference from Its modes (including even Its infinite modes as the *intellectus Dei*), which is the logically necessary inclusion of existence in Its essence. Thus, God is the only necessary being, as well as the only really existing substance, since substance is for SPINOZA that which is in and by itself, and does not depend on any other entity for its being (cf. *Ethica* I, def. III).

So far so good; but the decisive philosophical moment in SPINOZA'S concept of God is that of divine infinity. In particular, this seems to have the two interrelated aspects of *infinite* (inexhaustible) *productivity*, and *exhaustiveness* in God. By the 'infinite productivity' of God we mean that Its essence or nature, conceived as an infinite amount of infinite attributes,⁴⁶ produces, as a cause, an infinite number of *modi*, all of which express or represent the infinite essence of God. Under *exhaustiveness*, we mean that the essence of God exhausts the absolute fullness of being and essence. There is no other source of being and essence available: God is the

⁴⁵"*Quicquid enim in objecto cujuscunque ideae contingit, ejus rei datur necessario in Deo cognitio, (...) quatenus ejusdem objecti idea affectus consideratur, hoc est, (...) quatenus mentem alicujus rei constituit.*" (JELLES and RIEUWERTSZ, eds.), p. 51; roman parentheses, containing cross-references, by SPINOZA.

⁴⁶Cf. "*Deus, sive substantia constans infinitis attributis, quorum unumquodque aeternam, & infinitam essentiam exprimit, necessario existit.*" *Ethica*, pars I, propositio XI; (JELLES and RIEUWERTSZ, eds.), p. 8.

exclusive depository of them. Hence, God, this eminence of perfection in which essence and existence coincide, exists in the concomitant modalities of inexhaustible productivity, and exhaustiveness, in the sense that *beyond* God, there is no being or essence, but *in* God, being and essence are endless.⁴⁷

Albeit the inexhaustibility and the exhaustiveness of being and essence in God seem *prima fronte* two logically opposed components of the concept of God, they are, in reality, simply interlaced and interdependent aspects of the same concept of the infinity of God.

Next, a crucial characteristic of SPINOZA'S concept of God is the exclusion of intellection and volition from the essence or nature of God. SPINOZA'S God does not *consider*, and does not *choose* to act. This is, however, a token of absolute *perfection*, and not a shortcoming in Its nature. Certain statements of the *Cogitata metaphysica* should not mislead us here, and neither should a false reading of the *Ethics* I, proposition XVII, *scholium*.⁴⁸ SPINOZA'S interpretation of the perfection of God flows from his conception of the infinity of God as the absolutely exhaustive source of being and essence. God may not be conceived to be in *potency* in respect of things possible to 'create'. Omnipotence for SPINOZA must be eternally in actuality, must exhaustibly (endlessly) realize all that can be realized. If, however, God inevitably 'creates' whatever is logically possible to 'create', then the *momenta* of consideration and volition will appear superfluous, so they may not enter the concept of divine essence or nature.⁴⁹ But, as we have seen to some extent in the preceding points, the attribute of cogitation does necessarily *form* or *produce* an eternal and infinite 'idea (intellect) of God' as an immediate *modus* (cf. *Ethica* I/21 dem., II/3 and 4).

The essence of God, this exclusive and exhaustive accumulation of perfection and being, necessarily contains this idea, which is the idea of everything the existence of which necessarily follows from God's essence, besides being the idea of the

⁴⁷Cf. BRETON, who identifies Spinozism as the paradigmatic pattern of onto-theology in Western philosophy: "*Le Dieu de Spinoza est et reste Celui qui est, l'ens realissimum, dans l'infinité des infinis qui peuplent son essence.*" (BRETON 1973, p. 221; roman characters by BRETON.)

⁴⁸Cf. the following statement in the *Cogitata metaphysica*: "... *ejus (scil. Dei) existentia, ejusque intellectus ab ejus essentia non distinguuntur ...*" (*Cogitata metaphysica*, pars I, cap. II: *Quid sit esse Essentiae, quid esse Existentiae, quid esse Ideae, quid esse Potentiae*; GEBHARDT ed., vol. I, p. 238 = p. 98 of the original edition.) As is known, the *Cogitata metaphysica* may hardly be regarded as representative of SPINOZA'S own ideas, but is essentially an interpretative work. On the other hand, when SPINOZA specifies the difference between human and divine intellect in the explanation of proposition XVII, part I of the *Ethica*, saying that God's intellect might be conceived as Its essence, he talks in a hypothetical modality, as he first asserts "*ad Dei naturam neque intellectum, neque voluntatem pertinere.*" ((JELLES and RIEUWERTSZ, eds.), p. 18.) See further DE DIJN, p. 47.

⁴⁹Cf. *Ethica* I/XVII, *schol.*: "*Quare Dei omnipotentia actu ab aeterno fuit, & in aeternum in eadem actualitate manebit. Et hoc modo Dei omnipotentia longe, meo quidem judicio, perfectior statuitur. Imo adversarii Dei omnipotentiam (liceat aperte loqui) negare videntur. Coguntur enim fateri, Deum infinita creabilia intelligere, quae tamen nunquam creare poterit. ... Ut igitur Deum perfectum statuunt, eo rediguntur, ut simul statuere debeant, ipsum non posse omnia efficere, ad quae ejus potentia se extendit, quo absurdius, aut Dei omnipotentia magis repugnans, non video, quid fingi possit.*" ((JELLES and RIEUWERTSZ, eds.), p. 18.)

divine essence itself: “*In God there necessarily exists the idea of His essence, and of all things which necessarily follow from His essence.*”⁵⁰ Importantly, although the attribute of cogitation is infinitely productive (just like all other attributes), the *idea Dei* is still numerically one and perfectly simple, so there is, so to say, a coincidence of opposites in God, inasmuch as the infinite, productive and manifestative riches of God is reduced, in the idea of God, under the principle of divine oneness and simplicity: “*The idea of God, from which infinite numbers of things follow in infinite ways, can be one only.*”⁵¹

This thesis will help us begin a final philosophical assessment of SPINOZA'S concept of God. We shall examine it first from the perspective of the eternal infinite *idea Dei*, which bears a specific intrinsic relation with the indefinitely numerous ideas of finite individual things. This will enable us logically to consider SPINOZA'S concept of God in a broader metaphysical perspective, as that of the single infinite substance. Thereby, we shall be able to give a determinative answer also to our initial historical and interpretative dilemma of whether Spinozism has a real, let alone essential, philosophical relationship with the *anima mundi*-theory, as we have promised.

Let us first consider SPINOZA'S concept of God from the perspective of the infinite idea of God, this extraordinary *modus*, which holds not only the ideas of the individual human minds, but every idea representing every finite being whatever in the infinite universe. In this respect, SPINOZA asserts that the ideas of the *res singulares* are comprehended in the infinite divine *idea* in the same manner, and according to the same order and pattern, as the formal (real, extramental) essences of the finite individual things are included in the *attributes* of God:

*The ideas of non-existent individual things⁵² or modes are comprehended in the infinite idea of God, in the same way that the formal essences of individual things or modes are contained in the attributes of God.*⁵³

Even in general, the order of *cognition* is parallel or corresponds to the order of *being*: “*The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things.*”⁵⁴ But the principle of this (essentially Platonic) parallelism is the actual

⁵⁰“*In Deo datur necessario idea, tam ejus essentiae, quam omnium, quae ex ipsius essentia necessario sequuntur.*” (*Ethica, pars II, propositio III*; (JELLES and RIEUWERTSZ, eds.), p. 43. English transl. by WHITE and STIRLING, p. 374.) Cf. also *Cogitata metaphysica, pars II, cap. VII: De Intellectu Dei, ad fin.* (where the *idea Dei* is, as yet, identified with God's essence).

⁵¹“*Idea Dei, ex qua infinita infinitis modis sequuntur, unica tantum potest esse.*” (*Ethica, pars II, propositio IV*; (JELLES and RIEUWERTSZ, eds.), p. 43. English transl. by WHITE and STIRLING, p. 374.)

⁵²“*c'est-à-dire les idées des essences éternelles de ces choses*”, says GUEROULT, vol. II, p. 92 (underlining added). See a detailed explanation of this thesis *ibid.*, pp. 92–97.

⁵³“*Ideae rerum singularium, sive modorum non existentium ita debent comprehendi in Dei infinita idea, ac rerum singularium, sive modorum essentiae formales in Dei attributis continentur.*” (*Ethica, pars II, propositio VIII*; (JELLES and RIEUWERTSZ, eds.), p. 46. English transl. by WHITE and STIRLING, p. 375.)

⁵⁴“*Ordo, & connexio idearum idem est, ac ordo, & connexio rerum.*” (*Ethica, pars II, propositio VII*; (JELLES and RIEUWERTSZ, eds.), p. 45. English transl. by WHITE and STIRLING, p. 375.)

identity of these two orders. There is only one infinite substance in the universe (better, the universe *is* one infinite substance), of which cogitation (cognition) and extension are two essential attributes. These are, consequently, *really* (substantially) non-separable, though *logically* still distinguishable from each other: they reflect back on each other and express,⁵⁵ each in its specific manner, the essence of God. Thus, the concept of God as the “*substance consisting of infinite attributes, each one of which expresses eternal and infinite essence*”,⁵⁶ this basic speculative intuition of SPINOZA'S theology, does not allow that we exclusively-determinatively *reduce* the divine essence to one infinite attribute (cogitation, i.e., spiritual substance), let alone to one of its *modi*, but philosophically necessitates the substantial *identification* of the attribute of extension with that of cogitation, etc. Within a Spinozistic conceptual frame, it is philosophically not justified to talk about the ‘mind of God’, *intellectus/idea Dei*, as substantially different or separable from its attribute, or any other attribute it reflects. Strictly speaking, it is not justified either to say that in this system a particular, whether finite or infinite intellectual *modus* could be the soul or mind *of* a specific part of extended substance. For SPINOZA, substance is numerically one and indivisible, which, in practical terms, means that one can never philosophically declare that a body as a substance in its own right *has* a mind or *vice versa*. The one infinite substance, expressed by its numerically and intensively infinite attributes, displays itself in and by every finite, proximate and derived, *modus* (so also in the ideas of the particular human minds), which are, therefore, all essential manifestations of the single infinite substance. Hence, Spinozism, an original theory of God conceived as the infinitely perfect being and the unique infinite substance, seems to topologically situate the Neoplatonic One into the material universe, and to combine the resulting speculative theology with the doctrine of infinite manifestative attributes (perhaps of Cabbalistic origin). In this manner we have, if non-exhaustively, tried to determine the essential philosophical content of SPINOZA'S concept of God, and identified the fundamental metaphysical character of the relationship between God so conceived *and* the individual human minds as that between an ontologically independent infinite-supporting substrate, expressed by its attributes, *and* its modifications, non-existent by themselves.

⁵⁵Cf. DELEUZE'S explanation of the expressivity of the attributes and the unicity of substance: “*L'essence est exprimée comme essence de la substance, et non de l'attribut. Les essences sont distinctes dans les attributs où elles existent, mais ne font qu'un dans la substance dont elles sont l'essence. ... Les essences sont réellement distinctes du point de vue des attributs, mais l'essence est une du point de vue de l'objet* (i.e., the substance) *avec lequel elle se réciproque. Les attributs ne sont pas attribués à des substances correspondantes, de même genre ou de même espèce qu'eux-mêmes. Au contraire, ils attribuent leur essence à autre chose, qui reste donc la même pour tous les attributs. ... Toutes les essences existantes sont donc exprimées par les attributs dans lesquels elles existent, mais comme l'essence d'autre chose, c'est-à-dire d'une seule et même chose pour tous les attributs.*” (DELEUZE, pp. 34–35; roman characters by DELEUZE.)

⁵⁶*Ethica, pars I, propositio XI* (English transl. by WHITE and STIRLING, p. 358).

At this point, a definitive resolution of our initial query concerning the philosophical relationship between Spinozism and the *anima mundi* theory is already in view. As it will have been perceived, SPINOZA never considers God as a *soul*. 'Soul' is, in any case, a philosophical concept that does not absorb his attention, for as far as spiritual reality is concerned, the best of his interest goes to *mens* or mind. But, since for him, mind is, in a first approach, the idea representative of the correlated body's internal condition, it is, in principle, still possible to argue that SPINOZA considers God as the mind of the material universe, as a *mens universi*. Yet, even in this case, there is no such cooperation and interdependence between God as a *mens*, and the universe as Its *corpus*, as the classical concept of the body–mind relationship would stipulate. For that conception to obtain, there has to be a cooperation between body and mind: a *harmonia mentis et corporis*, which essentially consists in that the body is the source and determining ground of the perceptions of the mind, and in that the mind is the source and determining ground of the movement or rest of the body. But SPINOZA explicitly denies that in general this could be the case; cf. proposition II of part III:

*The body cannot determine the mind to thought, neither can the mind determine the body to motion nor rest, nor to anything else, if there be anything else.*⁵⁷

The explanation (*scholium*) of this proposition refers to the fundamental metaphysical thesis that the same thing (*res*) is expressed or manifested in the guise of two different *modi*, belonging, respectively, under the attributes of cogitation and extension:

*This proposition will be better understood from what has been said in the scholium of Proposition 7, part 2, that is to say, that the mind and the body are one and the same thing, conceived at one time under the attribute of thought, and at another time under that of extension.*⁵⁸

Thus, as we saw above, it is only *imaginatio*, i.e., in an imperfect modality of cognition that it is possible, in general, to contrast two modes of two different attributes of God, and to predicate the one of the other, in the way the universal soul is predicated of the cosmic body in the *anima mundi*-theory. In reality, SPINOZA warns us, reason warrants us that, in God, there is no combination of substances (cf. also

⁵⁷“*Nec Corpus Mentem ad cogitandum, nec Mens Corpus ad motum, neque ad quietem, nec ad aliquid (si quid est) aliud determinare potest.*” (*Ethica*, pars III, *propositio* II; *ibid.*, p. 97. Transl. by WHITE and STIRLING, p. 396.)

⁵⁸“*Haec clarius intelliguntur ex iis, quae in Scholio Propositionis 7. Partis 2. dicta sunt, quod scilicet Mens, & Corpus una, eademque res sit, quae jam sub Cogitationis, jam sub Extensionis attributo concipitur. Unde fit, ut ordo, sive rerum concatenatio una sit, sive natura sub hoc, sive sub illo attributo concipiatur ...*” (*Ibid.* Transl. by WHITE and STIRLING, p. 396.) The relevant passage of the *scholium* of proposition VII of part II reads as follows: “... *substantia cogitans, & substantia extensa una, eademque est substantia, quae jam sub hoc, jam sub illo attributo comprehenditur. Sic etiam modus extensionis, & idea illius modi una, eademque est res; sed duobus modis expressa ... Ex. gr. circulus in natura existens, & idea circuli existentis, quae etiam in Deo est, una, eademque est res, quae per diversa attributa explicatur; & ideo sive naturam sub attributo Extensionis, sive sub attributo Cogitationis, sive sub alio quocunque concipiamus, unum, eundemque ordinem, sive unam, eandemque causarum connexionem, hoc est, easdem res invicem sequi reperiemus.*” (*Ibid.*, p. 46.)

Cogitata metaphysica, pars II, caput V: De simplicitate Dei). When we consider God as an *idea* or *intellectus*, we only examine an infinite immediate *modus* of (and not a substance in) one divine attribute among the infinitely many. This *modus* is not necessarily or even hypothetically coordinated with the extended world, in the manner a soul is coordinated with its body. The two for us known aspects of the godhead open up (together with Its infinitely numerous, but for us unknown, other aspects) only different perspectives of the same inexhaustible, self-manifesting divine substance. Thus, it is only *by imagination* that one could represent the world of extension, an inseparable attribute of God, as a *body* to which cogitation as an attribute, or mind as a *modus*, of God is ascribed as a vivifying *soul*: in a final analysis, extension and cogitation are one and the same thing, “*una, eademque res*”. Hence, the one cannot be the substrate of, or even correlated to, the other, and so no predication is possible between them as long as they are considered *intellectu*, i.e., in accordance with the rules of true metaphysical cognition. Therefore, the hypothesis that Spinozism is, in a philosophical respect, essentially related to the *anima mundi*-theory has to be, as it appears, abandoned: the conceptual frame of SPINOZA'S metaphysics (more precisely, his concept of *Deus seu natura seu substantia*) does not make it, in truth, possible that God in his system be regarded as a kind of world soul.

But for all this, Spinozism itself is not to be disregarded in the context of our study. It remains a historical fact that the controversial attempts of interpretation of Spinozism in the Germany of the late eighteenth century (by JACOBI, MENDELSSOHN, etc.) only prepared the ground for an honest interest in, a genuine (or at least better) understanding of, and, ultimately, a full acceptance of this particular thought system on the part of young German Romantics like SCHLEIERMACHER and SCHELLING. Although SPINOZA'S philosophical–spiritual influence will be better discussed in connection with LESSING, it may still be pointed out here that the Spinozistic metaphysical intuition that most raised the interest of the early German Romantics was the thesis concerning the localization of the finite within the infinite, or, *vice versa*, the intramundane localization of the absolute determining ground of the world. SCHLEIERMACHER'S *Kurze Darstellung des Spinozistischen Systems* (1793–1794) and SCHELLING'S *Philosophische Briefen über Kritizismus und Dogmatismus* (1795), etc. demonstrate that the Romantic generation attributed greater philosophical coherence, and persuasive power, to Spinozism than to either Leibnizianism or Kantianism, precisely *because of* the doctrine of “*one immanent, eternally unchangeable cause of the world, which, together with all its effects, would be only one and the same thing ...*” (“*eine inwohnende, ewig in sich unveränderliche Ursache der Welt, welche mit allen ihren Folgen zusammengenommen nur Eins und dasselbe wäre ...*”).⁵⁹ Hence, as concerns the doctrine of the necessary substantial union of the finite with the infinite (which is a possible philosophical expression of the fundamental German Romantic experience of existence), and of the immanency

⁵⁹SCHELLING: *Philosophische Briefen über Kritizismus und Dogmatismus*, letter VII; AA, Reihe I, vol. 1, p. 82. With respect to SCHLEIERMACHER'S thought in this aspect, see the section “*Beurtheilung der Spinozistischen Theologie*”, subsection 1: “*Ueber die Gründe für und wieder eine extramundane Ursach*”, of his *Kurze Darstellung des Spinozistischen Systems* (KGA, I. Abt., vol. 1, pp. 569–570), etc.

of the efficient and material cause of the world, Spinozism was certainly a philosophically most relevant source of inspiration for young German Romantics. It is quite as certain, nonetheless, that they had learned about the *anima mundi*-theory from sources very different from SPINOZA. SCHELLING, e.g., had had first-hand information of the theory from PLATO'S *Timaeus* itself.

On the other hand, it is no doubt a historical fact as well that the alleged philosophical link between the two relevant theories here had been established very early, slightly more than three decades after the death of SPINOZA, and by an outstanding philosopher and lexicographer, Pierre BAYLE. The presentation and analysis of his particular interpretative conception that Spinozism is essentially identical with the *anima mundi*-theory is the topic of our following two points.

4 BAYLE'S Fundamental Philosophical Intention in the SPINOZA-Article of His *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (1697)

The renowned French Calvinist, Pierre BAYLE (1647–1706), who converted in his early years to Catholicism and swiftly reconverted to Protestantism, published, first in Rotterdam in 1697, a four-volume infolio *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, which, in its famous article on SPINOZA, suggests that Spinozism is essentially (“*dans le fond*”) identical with the hypothesis of the universal soul, *ame du Monde*. The author, an ex-professor of philosophy in Calvinist universities, and, previously, editor of the renowned learned periodical, *Nouvelles de la République des lettres*, was a man of profound erudition, extremely well versed in classical letters, history and philosophy. He grew irritated at the numerous philological, etc. mistakes that one of his forerunners in encyclopedic lexicography, Louis MORÉRI, had committed in *Le grand dictionnaire historique, ou le mélange curieux de l'histoire sacrée et profane* (1st edition 1674, 24 editions up to 1755). As a reaction, BAYLE ultimately built the title of his own encyclopedia of letters and universal history of culture and ideas (in his day and for a long time unparalleled) by adding the epithet ‘*critique*’ to the title MORÉRI’S lexicon had carried.⁶⁰

This is, indeed, a qualification that fits the *Dictionnaire*, an incomparable model of scientific precision. As a result of that reliability, but also because of the con-

⁶⁰BAYLE explains this in the foreword of the *Dictionnaire*. Cf. VAN LIESHOUT’S comment: “*De Dictionnaire biedt niet alleen kritiek op Moréri, de Dictionnaire is een kritiek op Moréri.*” (VAN LIESHOUT, 1992, chapter “*De verhouding tot de Dictionnaire van Louis Moréri*”, roman characters by VAN LIESHOUT; p. 115.) On MORÉRI’S work, see further A. MILLER: “Louis Moréri’s Grand dictionnaire historique” in KAFKER ed., pp. 13–52. For a detailed presentation of BAYLE’S *Dictionnaire* in respect of cultural history and the history of ideas, see VAN LIESHOUT, 1992 (also in English translation: VAN LIESHOUT, 2001). For a more strictly philosophical presentation and analysis of BAYLE’S dictionary, see P. BURRELL: “Pierre Bayle’s *Dictionnaire historique et critique*” in KAFKER ed., pp. 83–104.

sciously personal tone of presentation as well as the modernity of the philosophical and religious views of the author, the *Dictionnaire* quickly established itself as the standard reference work in letters on the entire continent (including Britain, by virtue of its English translations). It was used well into the early nineteenth century even in such distant regions of Europe as Eastern Hungary.⁶¹ Though at once banned in France, the *Dictionnaire*, by virtue of its immediate large-scale success enjoyed enormous diffusion. First published in 1697, it had, up to and including 1740, eight official editions in French (five of which appeared in the Netherlands), as well as two editions in English, one pirate edition (1715 Geneva), and was continued with a voluminous *Supplément* by J. G. CHAUFEPIÉ, first published in 1750. Importantly, a full German translation, the work of J. C. GOTTSCHED, appeared in Leipzig 1741–1744, under the title, *Historisches und Critisches Wörterbuch*.

The French editions, however, are not of equal philological value. The second (1701–1702) had been as yet seen through the press by BAYLE himself, so it is qualified as “*très-correcte*” by the *Avertissement* of the 1740 edition, while the 1720 (Rotterdam) and the 1730 (Amsterdam) editions are practically to be avoided, to believe the same notice, for more or less careless editorial work. There is some confusion around the numeration of the editions, as those published in the Netherlands have been numbered apart. So, it is best to refer to an edition by year and place of publication. As bibliographical sources suggest that the best edition is the one from Amsterdam 1740 (the fifth edition in the Netherlands), we have used this as our work copy.

In a philosophical respect, the *Dictionnaire* is, first and foremost, a vehicle for BAYLE to present and discuss crucial points in the philosophy and practice of religion, with special accent on the issue of religious toleration, which, in the historical context of the time, carried special importance because of the ongoing persecutions (the so-called “*dragonnades*”) of the Protestants in France. As is known, BAYLE was born in the period preceding the tragic revocation in 1685, by LOUIS XIV, of the Nantes Edict, issued by HENRY IV in 1598 in order to grant a relatively broad freedom of worship to the Huguenots. BAYLE, the son of a Calvinist pastor and himself a Huguenot, had a pastor brother lost due to the merciless persecutions and forced conversions (in VOLTAIRE's words, “*une violence regardée comme une horrible persécution*”)⁶² around the time of the Revocation, tokens of the utter brutality of the ‘perfectly Christian monarch’, *le roi tout catholique*.

Thus it is that the determinative momentum of BAYLE's thought had become the radical philosophical defence of religious tolerance, an idea that played a central

⁶¹ On BAYLE's impact on Enlightenment and Romantic Hungarian thought and philosophy, see VASSÁNYI in the bibliography. BAYLE's *Dictionnaire* was then regarded as a very dependable, authoritative source of historical and philological information, and as comparable in quality to the then newer German histories of philosophy (BRUCKNER etc.) in that country. The philosophical content of the numerous articles concerning philosophers was seriously considered by users, among them leading intellectuals of the time.

⁶² VOLTAIRE: *Le siècle de Louis XIV*, chapter XXXVI: *Du calvinisme au temps de Louis XIV*; POMEAU ed., p. 1052.

normative role also in the philosophy of religion of his illustrious contemporary in England, JOHN LOCKE. In BAYLE'S conception, the guiding principle of religious toleration was the superiority of natural practical reason over revelation and religious belief in general. In philosophical terms, the *Dictionnaire* was an instrument in the hands of BAYLE with which argumentatively-spiritually to defend his own Reformed religion as well. As P. BURRELL puts it:

*It seems apparent that Bayle's primary concern is to give a thorough, if partisan, account of what he understood to be the central issue of his own time, the Protestant Reformation. ... It seems Bayle meant the Dictionnaire to be, for the most part, a discussion about Protestantism, which he scrutinised and judged in the light of history.*⁶³

Himself a refugee in the Netherlands for reasons of religion, BAYLE took every occasion to argue that, especially, the moral commands deriving from religious belief have to be considered and controlled by the universalizable principles of natural practical reason (*la lumière naturelle* or *la lumière intérieure*), which is the gift of God:

*... every particular dogma, whether it is put forward as a Scriptural proposition or is advanced in some other manner, is false if it contradicts the clear and distinct notions of the natural light of reason, especially in matters concerning morality.*⁶⁴

For BAYLE, a logical consequence of this thesis is that church denomination, and even religion itself is indifferent in determining the moral quality of a particular person, a doctrine a bit later systematically expounded also by SHAFTESBURY, in *An Inquiry Concerning Virtue, or Merit*.⁶⁵ BAYLE'S idea that morality is metaphysically *not* founded on religion but depends on a separate capacity of the soul, involved the claim that religious tolerance has to be extended to the defence of atheism as well, as his often-cited *Miscellaneous Reflections on the Comet* (*Pensées diverses sur la comète*, 1682) asserted.⁶⁶ In this text, BAYLE, a more or less orthodox Calvinist fideist with agnostical tendencies in metaphysics, set atheism, at least in respect of morality, in a philosophically favourable light. This is, however, only

⁶³P. BURRELL: "Pierre Bayle's *Dictionnaire historique et critique*", in KAFKER ed., p. 89.

⁶⁴"... tout dogme particulier, soit qu'on l'avance comme contenu dans l'Écriture, soit qu'on le propose autrement, est faux, lorsqu'il est réfuté par les notions claires & distinctes de la lumière naturelle, principalement à l'égard de la morale." (*Commentaire philosophique sur ces paroles de Jésus-Christ "Contrains-les d'entrer"*, 1686, part one, chapter one, *ad fin.*; (OTTENS ed.), vol. II, p. 370. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, original orthography preserved throughout our citations from BAYLE'S texts.)

⁶⁵First sketched in 1691, published without the author's consent by TOLAND in 1699, first author-authorized and in 50 % revised edition: 1711, definitive *ultima manus* edition: 1714.

⁶⁶Modern, shortened editorial title. In its first edition, the text carried the somewhat complicated title "*Lettre à M. L. A. D. C. Docteur de Sorbonne Où il est prouvé par plusieurs raisons tirées de la Philosophie et de la Théologie, que les Comètes ne sont point le présage d'aucun malheur*". BAYLE changed the title, the arrangement, and the content of the second edition (1683), which came out as *Pensées diverses écrites à un Docteur de Sorbonne, à l'occasion de la Comète qui parut au mois de Décembre 1680*. The text is, besides, commonly referred to as *Lettres sur la Comète* as well.

apparently paradoxical as his true philosophical objective is hereby to establish morality on a ground independent from religion:

It has been realized by now how evident it is that a society of atheists would no less pursue civility and morality than other societies do, provided that it strictly punish crimes and associate honour or, respectively, infamy with certain things. Since the ignorance of a First Being, Creator and Preserver of the world would not hinder the members of this society in being sensitive to glory and contempt, recompense and pain, and all the passions we notice in other people, and would not quench the light of reason, one would find people in this society who believe in social life, who help the destitute, who oppose injustice, who are loyal to their friends, who despise insults, who renounce carnal pleasures, who do not hurt anyone, either because they are moved to such actions, which most certainly attract public approval, by the desire to be praised, or because they resort to such things in order to provide themselves with friends and protectors, in case they need them.⁶⁷

It is precisely this corollary, regarding the extension of religious toleration to atheism, that appears to be the fundamental philosophical message of the important SPINOZA-article of the *Dictionnaire historique et critique* as well, as G. FRIEDMANN points out,⁶⁸ or better, the SPINOZA-article apparently presents a specific case to be subsumed under the general principle of universal religious toleration. Namely, BAYLE elaborates here at length on the philosophically 'absurd', and in any case, 'atheistic' character of Spinozism on the one hand,⁶⁹ while on the other hand, he emphasizes the perfect integrity of SPINOZA's morals with the following words:

Those who were acquainted with him, and the peasants of the villages where he had lived in retirement for some time, all agree in saying that he was sociable, affable, honest, obliging, and of a well-ordered morality. This is strange; but, after all, we should not be

⁶⁷"On voit à cette heure, combien il est apparent qu'une Société d'Athées pratiqueroit les actions civiles et morales, aussi bien que les pratiquent les autres Sociétés, pourveu qu'elle fit punir severement les crimes, et qu'elle attachast de l'honneur et de l'infamie à certaines choses. Comme l'ignorance d'un premier Etre Createur et Conservateur du monde, n'empêcheroit pas les membres de cette Société d'être sensibles à la gloire et au mépris, à la recompense et à la peine, et à toutes les passions qui se voyent dans les autres hommes, et n'étoufferoit pas toutes les lumieres de la raison; on verroit parmi eux des gens qui auroient de la bonne foi dans le commerce, qui assisteroient les pauvres, qui s'opposeroient à l'injustice, qui seroient fidèles à leurs amis, qui mépriseroient les injures, qui renonceroient aux voluptez du corps, qui ne feroient tort à personne, soit parce que le désir d'être loüez les pousseroit à toutes ces belles actions, qui ne sauroient manquer d'avoir l'approbation publique, soit parce que le dessein de se menager des Amis et des Protecteurs, en cas de besoin, les y porteroit." (*Pensées diverses sur la comète*, chapter CLXXII: *Si une Société d'Athées se feroit des loix de bienséance et d'honneur*; PRAT ed., vol. II, pp. 102–103. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

⁶⁸Cf. the judgment of the general character of BAYLE's thought, by FRIEDMANN: "A coup sûr, une des préoccupations constantes, un des leitmotifs de ses articles est de démontrer, au passage, que la croyance aux dogmes religieux, la foi elle-même, ne corrigent pas les inclinations vicieuses et qu'en revanche l'athéisme ne conduit pas nécessairement à des moeurs corrompues. Cette opposition se retrouve dans le jugement qu'il porte sur Spinoza: *vie impeccable, dit-il, mais doctrine fautive et dangereuse.*" (FRIEDMANN, pp. 267–268.) On BAYLE's philosophical relation to SPINOZA's atheism, see also chapter "Deugdzame atheist" of KROP and VAN SLUIS, eds., pp. 184–196. KROP and VAN SLUIS in their book publish, and comment on, the Dutch version of BAYLE's SPINOZA-article.

⁶⁹Cf. "Je croi qu'il est le premier qui ait réduit en Système l'Athéisme, & qui en ait fait un Corps de Doctrine lié & tissu selon les manieres des Géometres: mais d'ailleurs son sentiment n'est point nouveau." (SPINOZA-article of the 1740 edition of the *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, footnote A.)

*more surprised by this than to see people who live very bad lives even though they are completely convinced of the Gospel.*⁷⁰

From a philosophical point of view, the SPINOZA-article of the *Dictionnaire* essentially seems to be an exemplification of BAYLE'S double thesis regarding the fallibility of theoretical or *speculative* reason, and the infallibility and hegemony of *practical* reason, a thesis he put forward in a systematic elaboration in the *Commentaire philosophique* (1686), as follows:

*Heaven forbid that I extend this principle as far as the Socinians do; but I think that even if there may be certain limitations on our knowledge of the speculative truths, there are no such limitations on it in respect of the practical and general principles that regard morality.*⁷¹

Applied to SPINOZA'S specific case, this thesis means that while SPINOZA continued to be a perfectly good man and citizen till the end of his life, he nevertheless got entangled in absurd ('atheistic') metaphysical speculations precisely when he wanted to ward off some philosophical difficulties of the Cartesian system. This is, for BAYLE, a posteriori biographical evidence that natural practical reason, the instrument of moral judgment, functions independently from fallible theoretical or speculative reason so that it remains a dependable arbiter of moral truth.⁷²

Hence, in the *Dictionnaire*, SPINOZA'S biography and thought system are particular cases on which to demonstrate the applicability and validity of BAYLE'S principles that philosophically establish and justify the idea of a universal religious tolerance. But, in fact, to what extent *did* BAYLE understand that thought system?

⁷⁰“Ceux qui ont eu quelques habitudes avec Spinoza, & les païsans des villages où il vécut en retraite pendant quelque tems, s'accordent à dire que c'étoit un homme d'un bon commerce, affable, honnête, officieux, & fort réglé dans ses moeurs. Cela est étrange; mais au fond il ne s'en faut pas plus étonner que de voir des gens qui vivent très mal, quoi qu'ils aient une pleine persuasion de l'Évangile.” (SPINOZA-article of the *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, main text. Transl. by R. H. POPKIN, p. 295.) A modern edition of the entire Spinoza-article is by CHARLES-DAUBERT and MOREAU, eds. (see bibliography).

⁷¹“A Dieu ne plaise que je veuille étendre ce principe autant que font les Sociniens; mais s'il peut avoir certaines limitations à l'égard des vérités spéculatives, je ne pense pas qu'il en doive avoir aucune à l'égard des principes pratiques & généraux qui se rapportent aux moeurs.” (*Commentaire philosophique* ..., part one, chapter one; (OTTENS ed.), vol. II, p. 368. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

⁷²W. SCHRÖDER, however, points out that there is a complexity in BAYLE'S evaluation of SPINOZA'S case, in so far as footnote N of the Spinoza-article also contains an attack on the *morally* destructive consequences of SPINOZA'S *metaphysics*, especially his concept of God as the unique universal substance. As SCHRÖDER says: “... die vehementesten Angriffe auf Spinozas Metaphysik in der Anmerkung N sich nicht auf deren theoretische Defizite beziehen. Diese sind zwar aus Bayles Sicht enorm ... Aber gleich im Anschluß an dieses Urteil setzt Bayle hinzu, daß dieselben metaphysischen Basisannahmen Spinozas»eine abscheuliche Widerwärtigkeit sind, wenn man dies von der Seite der Moral erwägt« (»une abomination execrable quand on considère ceci du côté de la morale« (see note N, § 4)). ... Es ist klar, worauf Bayle hinauf will:... (es) ergibt sich eine völlige Nivellierung moralischer Standards, wenn wir uns Spinozas Metaphysik zu eigen machen. ... Spinozas Philosophie entzieht moralischen Wertungen radikal die Grundlage. ... Aus Spinozas metaphysischen Basisannahmen folgt zwingend der Zusammenbruch unseres Moralverständnisses ...” (SCHRÖDER 2004, pp. 11, 12, and 13.) These observations are correct and SCHRÖDER'S reference to the Matthias KNUTZEN-article of the *Dictionnaire* is philosophically instructive. Nevertheless, for a

A philosophical analysis of this question is far from being a futile pastime, as the normative-interpretative positions BAYLE had taken on many issues exerted enormous or even determinative influence on the thought of the entire European republic of letters. In particular, the SPINOZA-article belongs among the philosophically heavy-weight chapters of the *Dictionaire*, besides being the passage where BAYLE discusses the *anima mundi* hypothesis at length, identifying it with Spinozism.

5 BAYLE'S Identification of Spinozism with the World Soul Theory in Footnote A of the SPINOZA-Article. SENECA'S Concept of God as an Alleged Philosophical Mediator. BAYLE'S Own Criticism of the World Soul Theory

In the *Dictionaire*, BAYLE'S philosophical interpretation of SPINOZA'S system of thought is, in a sense, two-faced. Evidently, he had an understanding of the more fundamental metaphysical doctrines of Spinozism like the numerical unicity of substance, the substantial identity of the attributes with God, the concept of God as an immanent cause, the nature of the relationship between the modifications and the attributes, etc. as footnote N, a summary of SPINOZA'S philosophy, proves:

*He supposes that there is only one substance in nature, and that this unique substance is endowed with an infinity of attributes – thought and extension among others. In consequence of this, he asserts that all the bodies that exist in the universe are modifications of this substance in so far as it is extended, and that, for example, the souls of men are modifications of this same substance in so far as it thinks; so that God, the necessary and infinitely perfect being, is indeed the cause of all things that exist, but he does not differ from them. There is only one being and only one nature; and this nature produces in itself by an immanent action all that we call creatures. It is at the same time both agent and patient, efficient cause and subject. It produces nothing that is not its own modification.*⁷³

reconstruction of BAYLE'S theory of the two functions of the human reason, we have to go to BAYLE'S *theoretical* writings as well. The most important of these are the *Commentaire philosophique*, the *Pensées diverses sur la comète*, and, perhaps, the originally manuscript *Systema totius philosophiae*. To some little extent, the less theoretical *Ce que c'est que la France toute catholique* may also be referred to here. Considering all these texts as an argumentative basis, it may be maintained that for BAYLE, natural *practical* reason is superior to *speculative* reason as well as revelation and religious belief in general. After all, BAYLE argues that especially the moral commands deriving from religious belief have to be considered and controlled by the universalizable principles of natural practical reason (*la lumière naturelle* or *la lumière intérieure*), which is the gift of God.

⁷³“Il suppose ... qu'il n'y a qu'une substance dans la nature, & que cette substance unique est douée d'une infinité d'attributs, & entre autres de l'étendue & de la pensée. Ensuite de quoi il assure que tous les corps qui se trouvent dans l'Univers sont des modifications de cette substance, autant qu'étendue; & que par exemple les ames des hommes sont des modifications de cette substance, autant que pensée: de sorte que Dieu l'Etre nécessaire, & infiniment parfait, est bien la cause de toutes les choses qui existent, mais il ne diffère point d'elles. Il n'y a qu'un Etre, & qu'une Nature, & cette Nature produit en elle-même, & par une action immanente, tout ce qu'on appelle Créatures. Il est tout ensemble agent & patient; cause efficiente, & sujet; il ne produit rien qui ne soit sa propre modification.” (SPINOZA-article of the 1740 edition of the *Dictionaire historique et critique*. Transl. by R. H. POPKIN, pp. 300–301.)

Thus, as a matter of historical fact, it appears that when, in the introductory phase of the so-called *Pantheismusstreit*, JACOBI argued against MENDELSSOHN that BAYLE on the whole did *not* misunderstand SPINOZA, he was right, while MENDELSSOHN, who asserted the contrary, was in this respect mistaken. When we philosophically examine BAYLE'S opinion that Spinozism is essentially identical with the world soul theory, JACOBI'S assessment of BAYLE'S interpretation will appear well-considered and historically correct as he says that: "*Bayle did not fail to understand Spinoza's system, as far as its conclusions are concerned; we can only say that he did not go back into its premises far enough ...*"⁷⁴

The philosophical touchstone of the proposition that BAYLE had a *fundamental*, but lacked a *complete*, or conceptually-logically highly precise, understanding of Spinozism is, among other things, his statement about the essential identity of Spinozism with the *anima mundi*-theory in footnote A of his article on SPINOZA. Let us first examine here the initial part of his argument, which reads as follows:

*The doctrine of the soul of the world, which was so common among the ancients, and made the principal part of the system of the Stoics, is, at the bottom, the same with that of Spinoza, which would more clearly appear, if it had been explained by authors versed in geometry; but because the books wherein it is mentioned are written rather in a rhetorical than a dogmatical method ...: hence it is that we find several material differences between his system, and that of the soul of the world.*⁷⁵

Thus, to believe BAYLE, the main difference between Spinozism and the world soul theory is one that regards the (respectively geometrical, or rhetorical) methodology of exposition. His main argument as it is seen also in the rest of Footnote A, structurally breaks down to the following two theses: (1) the concept of God conceived as the world soul is identical with the Stoic concept of God, and that (2) the Stoic concept of God is identical with SPINOZA'S concept of God. On the logical principle

⁷⁴"*Bayle hat das System des Sp., was die Schlußsätze anbelangt, nicht mißverstanden; man kann nur sagen, daß er es nicht weit genug zurück verstanden ... hat.*" (Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting by JACOBI.) This is a citation from JACOBI'S first letter to MENDELSSOHN: "*Sie (scil. MENDELSSOHN) fragen weiter: »Ob Leßing das System (scil. des SPINOZA) so genommen, wie es Bayle mißverstanden, oder wie andre es besser erklärt haben.« Zwischen verstehen und nicht mißverstehen, ist ein Unterschied. Bayle hat das System des Sp., was die Schlußsätze anbelangt, nicht mißverstanden; man kann nur sagen, daß er es nicht weit genug zurück verstanden, nicht die Gründe davon, nach dem Sinne des Verfassers, eingesehen hat. Wenn Bayle nach dem Sinne Ihres Vorwurfs, den Sp. mißverstanden hat, so hat ihn, nach demselben Sinne, Leibnitz noch ein wenig ärger mißverstanden.*" (JACOBI'S letter to MENDELSSOHN, 4 Nov. 1783 as embedded in the text of JACOBI'S *Über die Lehre des Spinoza in Briefen an den Herrn Moses Mendelssohn*; GA, vol. I/1, p. 43. JACOBI'S reference is to MENDELSSOHN'S first, 1 September 1783 letter to JACOBI. Highlighting by JACOBI.)

⁷⁵"*Le dogme de l'Ame du Monde, qui a été si commun parmi les Anciens, & qui faisait la partie principale du Système des Stoïques, est dans le fond celui de Spinoza. Cela paroîtroit plus clairement si des Auteurs Géometres l'avoient expliqué (scil. le dogme de l'âme du monde); mais comme les Ecrits, où il en est fait mention, tiennent plus de la méthode des Rhétoriciens, que de la méthode dogmatique ...: de là vient que nous trouvons plusieurs différences capitales entre son Système, & celui de l'ame du Monde.*" (SPINOZA-article of the 1740 edition of the *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, footnote A. Translated by the anonymous translator of BAYLE 1826, p. 273. R. H. POPKIN ed. did not include the lengthy Footnote A in his translation of the SPINOZA-article.)

that if $a = b$ and $b = c$, then $a = c$, one might draw the (philosophically mistaken) conclusion that SPINOZA essentially conceives of God as a kind of universal soul.

As we hope to show in our following citations, (1) is a conceptually imprecise premiss of the conclusion. BAYLE nonetheless successfully puts this premiss into a favourable light by a historical interpretative undertaking he effectuates without recourse to the Greek Stoic sources, i.e., relying only on Latin representatives of Stoicism like, first and foremost, L. A. SENECA and his nephew, the poet LUCANUS. In these authors, BAYLE finds a concept of God as the absolute totality of the material and spiritual universe, as the vivifying, all-inclusive $\epsilon\nu\text{-}\kappa\alpha\iota\text{-}\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu$, *natura* or *mundus*; cf. his citations of SENECA:

*All this universe which encompasses us is one, and it is God; we are associates of God; we are his members.*⁷⁶

*They recognized the same Jupiter we do, the controller and guardian of the universe, the mind and spirit of the world, the lord and artificer of this artefact, the world. Any name for him is suitable. You wish to call him Nature? You will not be mistaken. It is he from whom all things are naturally born, and we have life from his breath. You wish to call him the Universe? You will not be wrong. He himself is all that you see, infused throughout all his parts, sustaining both himself and his own.*⁷⁷

The presence in this argument of the universal terms *natura* (used also by SPINOZA as a designation of God) and *mundus* already anticipate premiss (2) of the identification of Spinozism with the *anima mundi*-theory. But the argument itself implies a capital conceptual-logical inconsistency. As long as the relevant philosophical concepts are used strictly, i.e., univocally, and according to their classical acceptation (the soul of the world is the spiritual entity animating and moving the world, which as its body provides its soul with sense perceptions by virtue of its material organs), it will be logically impossible to maintain that God is, on the one hand, the soul of the world, while, on the other hand, He is also the entire world

⁷⁶“*Totum hoc quo continemur, & unum est, & Deus, & socii ejus sumus & membra ...*” (L. A. SENECA: *Epistola XCII, On the happy life*, § 30, as cited in footnote A of the SPINOZA-article in BAYLE's *Dictionaire*. Minor differences occur in interpunctuation and word order in the modern critical edition of REYNOLDS, vol. II, p. 358. Transl. by R. M. GUMMERE, vol. II, p. 467.)

⁷⁷“*Eundem quem nos Jovem intelligunt (scil. Etrusci), custodem rectoremque universi, animum ac spiritum, mundani hujus operis dominum & artificem, cui nomen omne convenit ... Vis illum naturam vocare? non peccabis. Est enim, ex quo nata sunt omnia, cujus spiritu vivimus. Vis illum vocare mundum? non falleris. Ipse enim est, totum quod vides, totus suis partibus inditus, & se sustinens vi sua.*” (SENECA: *Quaestiones naturales, liber II, caput XLV* as cited in footnote A of the SPINOZA-article in BAYLE's *Dictionaire*. Transl. by T. H. CORCORAN, slightly modified by M. VASSÁNYI; small capitals by BAYLE.) The modern critical edition of the text, besides some minor textual changes, has “*mundi*” after “*animum ac spiritum*” in the first sentence, as follows: “... *sed eundem quem nos Jovem intelligunt, rectorem custodemque universi, animum ac spiritum mundi ...*”; and has “*et sua*” instead of “*vi sua*” in the last line (cf. HINE ed., pp. 93–94; underlining added). BAYLE further refers to LUCANUS' *De bello civili* (traditionally called ‘*Pharsalia*’), chant IX, line 580, where in a fictional speech, CATO says the following: “*Jupiter est quodcumque vides, quocumque moveris.*” (The modern critical edition has “*quodcumque*” instead of “*quocumque*”; cf. SHACKLETON BAILEY ed., p. 246.)

(*mundus, natura*) itself. This is, in formal logical terms, like saying that the part is the whole, while it is an a priori analytical principle that the part is necessarily smaller than (and so in respect of identity, not the same as) the whole. An identification of the part with the whole is only possible if the medial term (*anima mundi*) in an identifying syllogism is used equivocally or metaphorically. Hence, in principle, it is not possible to assert in strict logical terms, and according to the classical (Platonic) sense of the term *world soul*, that the concept of God as *anima mundi* can ever be identified with a (Stoic) concept of God as the absolute totality of the material and spiritual universe. So, BAYLE'S premiss (1) has to fail.

This conclusion remains true even though SENECA *does* explicitly identify the concept of God as the totality of all existants with the concept of a universal soul or mind, even in the above citation (see modern critical text, cited in footnote). In fact, both book one and book two of his *Naturales quaestiones* assert explicitly, defying modern logic, that although God (*Iuppiter*) is *mens universi* and *animus mundi*, He is nevertheless also the entire universe conceived as the organic totality or omnitude of whatever exists perceptibly or non-perceptibly. Let us consider the following passage from the *praeafatio* of book one:

What is god? The mind of the universe. What is god? All that you see, all that you do not see. In short, only if he alone is all things, if he maintains his work both from within and without, is he given due credit for his magnitude; nothing of greater magnitude than that can be contemplated.

*What, then, is the difference between our nature and the nature of god? In ourselves the better part is the mind, in god there is no part other than the mind. He is entirely reason.*⁷⁸

For SENECA, there is apparently no a priori logical contradiction between the proposition that God is the all-inclusive totality of the visible and invisible universe (God is that greater than which nothing can be thought of) and the thesis that God is the mind, or indistinctively, soul, of the universe. It seems that he uses the term *mens universi* (or *animus mundi*) not in a univocal (classical) sense: in fact, it remains undecided, at least throughout books I and II of the *Naturales quaestiones*, whether God “*is a part of the universe or is the universe*” (“*pars mundi sit an mundus*”).⁷⁹ So SENECA does not determine if God is a specific *part* of the world or the organic *omnitude* of all that there is, he prefers to hold in suspense both these possibilities, and contemplate them alternatively. Neither does he use the terms *animus*, *spiritus*, *mens*, *ratio* distinctively, when he applies them to God. He seems to suggest thereby that the immensity and inexhaustibility of God will endure to be denoted by any and all of these terms likewise, though he otherwise uses *animus* as a technical

⁷⁸ “*quid est deus? mens universi. quid est deus? quod vides totum et quod non vides totum. Sic demum magnitudo illi sua redditur, qua nihil maius cogitari potest, si solus est omnia, si opus suum et intra et extra tenet. Quid ergo interest inter naturam dei et nostram? nostri melior pars animus est, in illo nulla pars extra animum est. totus est ratio ...*” (SENECA: *Quaestiones naturales*, book one: *De ignibus caelestibus, praeafatio*, § 13; HINE ed., p. 7. Transl. by T. H. CORCORAN, p. 11.)

⁷⁹ SENECA: *Quaestiones naturales*, book one: *De ignibus caelestibus, praeafatio*, § 2; *ibid.*, p. 2. Transl. by T. H. CORCORAN, p. 3.

term to refer to the individual 'spiritual' substance, representing the moral self and surrounded ('*circumdatatur*')⁸⁰ by the body, which it leaves in the moment of biological death; *spiritus* with reference to hot and humid air, collected in the higher atmosphere and regarded as a unified block, which supplies the fiery material of thunderbolts as well; *mens* (a seldom-recurring, undefined term) apparently in the meaning of pure thought; and *ratio* to signify the *principale rationale* (τὸ ἡγεμονικόν), i.e., the highest-ranking, rational directive principle of the soul, which comes from, and never ceases to be a part of, divine reason itself ("... *ex illa <scil. divina ratione> est*").⁸¹ Hence, SENECA essentially conceives of God as the entity 'for whom any name is suitable' ("... *cui nomen omne convenit*"),⁸² as the many-named, universal being, which the philosopher may want to contemplate under this or that (possible and real) aspect of its indefinitely many (possible and real) aspects, without ever feeling constrained to designate one of them as the essential one or even to specify whether God is some *one* of these aspects or, rather, *all* of them together, the absolute organic totality of every existing thing.

Now it is, on the one hand, certain that you cannot philosophically say that such a concept of God may, without any further qualification, be identified with that of the *anima mundi*. Thus, premiss (1) of BAYLE's argument is, all considered, bound to fail. But on the other hand, a more promising perspective might open up before premiss (2) (concerning the identification of the Stoic concept of God with SPINOZA's corresponding concept) in that a degree of philosophical affinity has now become perceptible between the involved concepts, as our reader will have noticed. Yet the degree of that affinity must be precisely determined.

Premiss (2) of BAYLE's argument concerning the identification of the Stoic concept of God with SPINOZA's concept of God seems, in a first approach, just possible in historical philosophical terms. SENECA's concept of God could possibly be interpreted as that of an all-inclusive entity with several concurrent manifestative aspects, and thereby, as representing a specific version of the doctrine of the unicity of substance. This claim is philosophically further substantiated by SENECA's fundamental theological position that God is an *intramundane* being. In fact, it never seems to occur to SENECA that God could be an *extramundane* entity, as one underlying characteristic question of his theology is whether God is better conceived as *part* of the world or as the entire world itself.

Then again, SENECA, similarly to SPINOZA, sees individual human reason as deriving from, and remaining a part of, divine reason. In this psychological scheme, man, by virtue of his or her reason, is thus part of God ("*dei pars*"), there is something

⁸⁰ Cf. *Epistula moralis* № XCII, point 13: "*Quod de veste dixi, idem me dicere de corpore existima. Nam hoc quoque natura ut quandam vestem animo circumdedit; velamentum eius est.*" (REYNOLDS ed., vol. II, p. 354.)

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, point 1: "*Nam illa quoque divina ratio omnibus praeposita est, ipsa sub nullo est; et haec autem nostra eadem est, quia ex illa est.*" (REYNOLDS ed., vol. II, p. 351.)

⁸² *Quaestiones naturales*, book two: *De fulminibus et tonitribus*, § 45; HINE ed., p. 79. Transl. by T. H. CORCORAN, word order re-arranged.

divine (“*divini aliquid*”, i.e., reason) in man.⁸³ Therefore, reason is common to the gods and the humans alike, the specific difference between divine and human reason being that the former is already perfect (“*consummata*”), while the latter is perfectable (“*consummabilis*”) only, emphasizes SENECA.⁸⁴ Hence, there is indeed some limited philosophical affinity between the respectively Stoic and Spinozistic concepts of God.

However, SENECA who considers God as a flawless all-inclusive totality or *totum* does not philosophically exploit the absolute *infinity* (inexhaustability) of God, whereas for SPINOZA, the concept of God as an absolute totality of all existants is completed with or infinitely extended by the attribute of infinity. While this may be seen as a difference of philosophical *emphasis* only (which is consequently of no decisive weight), still, it is true, further, that for SENECA, the soul (*animus*) leaves the body as soon as biological death sets in (*‘corpus ab animo resolvitur’*),⁸⁵ a thesis difficult to think in the Spinozan system in which a crucial metaphysical point is the ultimate substantial identity of body and soul. But the philosophically most momentous argument against BAYLE’S identification thesis is that SENECA is a metaphysical monist: he represents, if vacillatingly, a *materialism* that asserts that the soul, the virtues, and the supreme moral good itself are of a corporeal nature, i.e., composed of minute bodies. The soul as a more delicate kind of matter is thus wrapped up in the coarser, harder husk of the organic body of every living being. Our chief philosophical evidence in this respect is SENECA’S relatively terse moral epistle № CVI, where the author states that:

*Now the good is active: for it is beneficial; and what is active is corporeal. The good stimulates the mind and, in a way, moulds and embraces that which is essential to the body. The goods of the body are bodily; so therefore must be the goods of the soul. For the soul, too, is corporeal.*⁸⁶

The rest of the epistle makes it more than plausible that this corporealism is to be understood as a materialism: there is no question about a *spiritual* corporeality here. This seems to cancel the philosophical justification of BAYLE’S second interpretative thesis as well. SPINOZA may not be regarded as a metaphysical materialist,

⁸³ Cf. *Epistula moralis* № XCII, point 30: “*Quid est autem cur non existimes in eo divini aliquid existere, qui dei pars est?*” (REYNOLDS ed., vol. II, p. 358.)

⁸⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, point 27: “*Ratio vero dis hominibusque communis est; haec in illis consummata est, in nobis consummabilis.*” (REYNOLDS ed., vol. II, p. 358.)

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, book two: (*De fulminibus et tonitribus*), § 59; HINE ed., p. 89 (not a literal citation). Cf. also epistle № XCII, much of which discusses the necessary moral disposition in respect of the circumstance that the soul quits the body upon biological death.

⁸⁶ “*Bonum facit; prodest enim; quod facit corpus est. Bonum agitat animum et quodam modo format et continet, quae propria sunt corporis. Quae corporis bona sunt corpora sunt; ergo et quae animi sunt; nam et hoc ‘this thing’, i.e., the soul) corpus est.*” (*Epistula moralis* № CVI, *On the corporeality of virtue*, points 4–5; REYNOLDS ed., vol. II, p. 445. Transl. by R. M. GUMMERE, vol. III, p. 219.) Epistle CXIII, *On the animality of virtue*, further elaborates on the corporeality of the virtues and of the soul, as well as contends that the virtues are in a sense even ‘animate’ (“*animalia*”). Cf. also epistle XCII, point 10, where SENECA refers to both ‘*virtus divina animi*’ and ‘*voluptas*’ as ‘*corpora*’.

so his concept of God may not be reduced to that of an *anima mundi* including materiality as an essential attribute, something that SENECA's concept of God as an *animus mundi* apparently does involve. Besides, in the *Tractatus de intellectus emendatione*, SPINOZA explicitly rejects the Stoic concept of *anima* as a material entity, so it is in historical terms impossible to maintain that the Stoic conception of God as *anima mundi* may philosophically be related with SPINOZA's concept of God.⁸⁷

Last, we may point out that it is against SPINOZA's original determinative philosophical intention to assert that God can be *in any sense* the soul of the material cosmos (as we have seen under Section 6, *ad fin.*), while SENECA's concept of God does clearly allow for this option.

Hence, it appears that so long as the involved concepts are used within a philosophically acceptable semantic spectrum, none of the two premisses is completely true on which BAYLE builds the ultimate identification of Spinozism with the world soul theory. As soon, however, as the concepts are handled with some semantic or logical laxity, their affinity may become more plausible. Thus, the fundamental metaphysical content of Spinozism might be interpreted as essentially equal to the *anima mundi* hypothesis *only if* that hypothesis is philosophically represented as a particular version of the doctrine of the unicity of substance, while Stoic theology can serve, for BAYLE, as an alleged philosophical mediator by virtue of its lax conceptual-logical framework, in which the identification of the two relevant concepts was not seen as logically impossible. Therefore, JACOBI's above-cited assessment has been verified: BAYLE did not fundamentally misunderstand SPINOZA, though he, i.e., BAYLE, probably failed to understand him completely or 'deep enough' ("*weit genug zurück*") and thus failed also to interpret SPINOZA in a historically correct manner.

But footnote A of the SPINOZA-article of the *Dictionaire* has farther-reaching philosophical aspirations than pure interpretation. It takes a systematic position on the *anima mundi*-theory in itself as well. As it will be perceived, BAYLE's following interpretation and analysis of that theory might have influenced LEIBNIZ when he was writing his *Considerations sur la doctrine d'un Esprit Universel Unique* (1702;

⁸⁷SPINOZA considers the Stoic concept of the soul as an example on which to illustrate a specific case of *falsitas* or *idea falsa*, when a clear and distinct idea of the *intellect* is conceived confusedly by the *imagination*: "... *contingit, ut quaedam, quae in imaginatione offeruntur, sint etiam in intellectu, hoc est, quod clare, & distincte concipiuntur, quod tum* ('since in this case'), *quamdiu distinctum a confuso non distinguitur, certitudo, hoc est, idea vera*{,} *cum non distinctis commiscetur. Ex. gr. quidam Stoicorum forte audiverunt nomen animae, & etiam quod sit immortalis, quae tantum confuse imaginabantur; imaginabantur etiam, & simul intelligebant corpora subtilissima caetera omnia penetrare, & a nullis penetrari. Cum haec omnia simul imaginabantur, concomitante certitudine hujus axiomatis, statim certi reddebantur, mentem esse subtilissima illa corpora, & subtilissima illa corpora non dividi, &c. Sed ab hoc etiam liberamur, dum conamur ad normam datae verae ideae omnes nostras perceptiones examinare cavendo, uti initio diximus, ab iis, quas ex auditu, aut ab experientia vaga habemus.*" (JELLES and RIEUWERTSZ, eds.), p. 380.)

see our Section 1 of Chapter 2 and Section 5 of Chapter 3). BAYLE'S wording and exposition come near to that of LEIBNIZ as BAYLE writes that:

I shall observe, by the way, an absurdity of those who maintain the system of the soul of the world. They say that all the souls, both of men and brutes, are particles of the soul of the world, which are re-united to their whole by the death of the body: and to make us understand it, they compare animals to bottles full of water, floating upon the sea. If those bottles were broken, their water could be re-united to its whole; thus it is with particular souls, say they, when death destroys the organs in which they were shut up. ... It is no difficult thing to perceive the falsity of this parallel. The matter of the bottles floating in the sea is an inclosure, which keeps the sea water from touching the water they are full of; but if there were a soul of the world, it would be dispersed through all the parts of the universe, and therefore nothing could prevent the union of the soul to its whole, and death could not produce that re-union.⁸⁸

It seems that BAYLE here no longer identifies the theory of the universal soul with that of the unicity of substance: the world soul theory is adumbrated here according to the Neoplatonic philosophical pattern in which the *ψυχή τοῦ κόσμου* is an entity substantially distinct from the material frame of the world. So, on the one hand, BAYLE is not consequent in his fundamental philosophical interpretation and presentation of the world soul hypothesis. But, on the other hand, even his above-cited systematic argument against that theory appears to be inconclusive. Despite what he proposes, it seems philosophically still possible to think that an individual part of the universal soul (as the Stoic MARCUS AURELIUS says, an *ἀπόσπασμα Διός*, a 'fragment of Zeus')⁸⁹ informs and animates a particular organic body and is thereby partially and temporarily isolated from it, to return into it after the decomposition of the organs of that specific body. A material bodily frame, namely, may be thought to partially at least insulate the individual soul of a living being from a universal soul, once individual souls must be of a constitution that allows them to be the internal organic and animating form of physical bodies. The soul of a particular physical body must organically belong to its body; and if that soul is to originate from the universal soul, it seems logical

⁸⁸"*Je remarquerai en passant une absurdité de ceux qui soutiennent le Systême de l'âme du Monde. Ils disent que toutes les ames, & des hommes, & des bêtes, sont des particules de l'ame du Monde, qui se réunissent à leur tout par la mort du corps: &, pour nous faire entendre cela, ils comparent les animaux à des bouteilles remplies d'eau qui floteraient dans la mer. Si l'on cassoit ces bouteilles, leur eau se réuniroit à son tout: c'est ce qui arrive aux ames particulieres, disent-ils, quand la mort détruit les organes où elles étaient enfermées. ... Il est facile de voir la fausseté du parallèle. La matiere des bouteilles qui flotent dans l'Ocean est une cloison, qui empêche que l'eau de la mer ne touche l'eau dont elles sont pleines; mais s'il y avoit une ame du Monde, elle seroit répandue dans toutes les parties de l'univers, & ainsi rien ne pourroit empêcher l'union de chaque ame avec son tout; la mort ne pourroit pas être un moien de réunion."* (SPINOZA-article of the 1740 edition of the *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, footnote A. Translated by the anonymous translator of BAYLE, 1826, p. 275.) See a philosophical analysis of the problem in Section 1 of Chapter 2 and Section 5 of Chapter 3.

⁸⁹Cf. MARCUS AURELIUS: *To himself* ('Thoughts'), book five, 27 (DALFEN ed., p. 44; not a literal citation).

that certain essential attributes, the omnipresence and all-pervasiveness of the world soul, are to a degree diminished, though not fully annihilated, in particular living bodies. Further, in Stoic philosophy, the existence of a world soul is postulated as a principle of the all-embracing, organic unity of the natural universe, in which all individual parts are functionally integrated, harmoniously conspire and tend towards the same common *telos*: the good of the whole. In this conception the world *is* essentially order ('κόσμος') in itself. It is on this natural philosophical ground that Stoic thinkers consider the universe as a single, universal living being, ἔν ζῶον, which apparently has to have a unified sensation (αἴσθησις μία), if it is to have, as it does, a perfectly coordinated internal movement (ὀρμηὶ μιᾷ πάντα πράσσει). This principle of a unified sensation is a numerically one soul (ψυχὴ μία).⁹⁰ These could be, then, the philosophical ground-lines of a Stoic defence of the theory against BAYLE's above-cited counter-argument.

When all is said and done, it does appear that many early modern thinkers, including BAYLE, were simply reluctant, on essentially dogmatic grounds, to consider earnestly certain philosophical doctrines like, e.g., Spinozism, or the world soul theory. The later intellectuals who were ready to philosophically examine such thought systems, as it were, *ab intra* were often seriously puzzled or, on the contrary, attracted by them like, e.g., JACOBI or SCHELLING. The specificity of BAYLE's philosophical presentation in the *Dictionnaire*, of Spinozism is that he uses the case of SPINOZA as a model by which to demonstrate his thesis concerning the moral harmlessness or neutrality of atheism, and to point out the restricted validity of speculative reason. The historically proper interpretation of Spinozism in a sense falls victim to this latent philosophical motif of the SPINOZA-article. The reduction of SPINOZA's fundamental metaphysics to the, in itself, 'absurd', Stoically conceived *anima mundi*-theory is, in a way, instrumental in proving the unreliability of theoretical reason in the (then especially important) domain of theology.

But BAYLE's influential interpretation of Spinozism was not credited by everyone. In particular, J. G. WACHTER, an author read and annotated by LEIBNIZ, among others, directly rebutted the thesis that there is a philosophical connection, let alone an essential one, between SPINOZA's thought system and the *anima mundi*-theory. He takes a position on the issue in his then well-known book, *Elucidarius Cabalisticus*, the philosophical presentation of which is the topic of our following point.

⁹⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, book four, 40: "Ὡς ἐν ζῶον τὸν κόσμον μίαν οὐσίαν καὶ ψυχὴν μίαν ἐπέχον συνεχῶς ἐπινοεῖν, καὶ πῶς εἰς αἴσθησιν μίαν τὴν τούτου πάντα ἀναδίδεται καὶ πῶς ὀρμηὶ μιᾷ πάντα πράσσει καὶ πῶς πάντα πάντων τῶν γινομένων συναίτια καὶ οἶα τις ἡ σύννησις καὶ συμμήρυσις." (DALFEN ed., pp. 32–33.)

6 WACHTER'S Position in the *Elucidarius Cabalisticus* (1702, publ. 1706) that Spinozism is Philosophically Incompatible with the World Soul Theory

Johann Georg WACHTER (1673–1757) was a lexicographer,⁹¹ philosopher, theologian and Lutheran pastor, who first published (besides leaving behind many manuscripts)⁹² *Spinozism in Jewish Thought (Der Spinozismus im Jüdenthumb, Oder, die von dem heütigen Jüdenthumb, und dessen Geheimen Kabbala Vergötterte Welt*, Amsterdam, 1699; see our Section 12)⁹³ and the short *Origins of Natural Law (Origines Juris naturalis sive de Jure Naturae Demonstrationes Mathematicae*, a Spinozistic theory of law, Berlin, 1704).⁹⁴ WACHTER had had first-hand knowledge, but a questionable philosophical understanding, of SPINOZA'S thought, when, in 1702, he wrote a third book on Cabbala and Spinozism, more precisely on the Cabbalistic interpretation of SPINOZA'S philosophy. This essay, entitled, *Elucidarius Cabalisticus, sive Reconditae Hebraeorum Philosophiae Brevis & Succincta Recensio* (i.e., 'The Cabbalistic Enlightener, or a Short and Concise Account of the Secret Philosophy of the Hebrews'), was eventually published only in 1706, after several years of delay caused, as W. SCHRÖDER says,⁹⁵ by its Spinozistic tendency.⁹⁶

⁹¹After he had been recognised as a Spinozist, WACHTER restricted his scientific activities to the field of philology – see his first (Leipzig, 1727) and second *Glossarium Germanicum* (Leipzig, 1737) etc. By virtue of his research into the history of the German language, he became a renowned linguist (“als Sprachwissenschaftler sogar international geachtet,” SCHRÖDER 1987, 68–69).

⁹²One manuscript he brought into clandestine circulation was the *De primordiis Christianae religionis*, in which, as W. SCHRÖDER says, “erstmal der Nachweis der These versucht wurde, daß das Christentum ein religionsgeschichtlicher Ableger der jüdischen Sekte der Essener ist ... Mit den aus den antiken Zeugnissen gezogenen Befunden glaubt Wachter nun seine These stützen zu können, daß das Christentum nicht ... als eine »vom Himmel gefallene« (»de coelo lapsus«) Religion anzuerkennen ist ...” (SCHRÖDER 1998, 109–110). See a list of his other, lost manuscripts in SCHRÖDER 1987, 63.

⁹³Modern reprographic edition with introduction (including critical biography), commentary and bibliography: SCHRÖDER ed., 1994a (see our bibliography). Complete bibliography on WACHTER'S multifarious works (WACHTER'S own manuscripts and books, as well as early modern and modern secondary literature) *ibid.*, pp. 36–48. For WACHTER'S autobiography, see *Leben Johann Georg Wachers, aus seiner eignen Handschrift* (1763; *ibid.*, pp. 277–290). A short overview, written by W. SCHRÖDER, of WACHTER'S life and works is also found in HOLZHEY and SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN, eds. 892–893. A detailed biography is offered by SCHRÖDER 1987, 59–70.

⁹⁴Modern edition, together with the *Elucidarius Cabalisticus*, LEIBNIZ'S *Animadversiones ad J. G. Wachteri librum* (in a simple reproduction of FOUCHER DE CAREIL'S edition without the French translation) etc.: SCHRÖDER ed., 1994b (see bibliography).

⁹⁵“Ursache dieser Verzögerung wie auch Anlass, den Verleger und den tatsächlichen Druckort der Schrift zu verschweigen, war ihre spinozistische Tendenz ...” (SCHRÖDER 1987, p. 84).

⁹⁶WACHTER says, following the end of the preface to the reader (p. 14), that ‘many oppressed this book for a period of three years’ (“responsio ad Censuras iniquissimas, quibus hic Liber à non nullis per Triennium oppressus est ...”; small capitals by WACHTER). W. SCHRÖDER points out that already during these three years, the *Elucidarius*, ready in 1702, had circulated in manuscript (SCHRÖDER 1998, 414).

Although the title page specifies Rome as its place of publication, it probably appeared either in Halle or in Rostock.⁹⁷

The *Elucidarius Cabalisticus*, which on the ground of treacherous philosophical considerations explicitly rejects the idea that there is a philosophical connection between Spinozism and the *anima mundi*-theory, was written with a double, partly polemic, objective. As WACHTER relates in the *Praefatio ad Lectorem*, his first work, *Der Spinozismus im Jüdenthumb ...*, although anti-Cabbalistic and anti-Spinozistic in spirit, had been attacked by the important Halle professor and historian of philosophy, J. Fr. BUDDÉ (Buddaeus). BUDDÉ's two studies on Cabbala,⁹⁸ however, seemed so imprecise in historical and philosophical respects to WACHTER⁹⁹ (who, in the meantime, had completely changed his mind and became a supporter of Cabbala and Spinozism)¹⁰⁰ that he felt challenged to refute them (“*refutare errores alienos*”), and on this occasion, also to revise his own earlier position on the issue (“*corrigere meos (scil. errores)*”).¹⁰¹

In the book, a lengthy preface is followed by five chapters, each of them subdivided in several theses or questions. Thus, chapter one (*De origine Cabalae*) traces the Cabbalistic doctrine back to Adam; chapter two, *De propagatione Cabalae*

⁹⁷W. SCHRÖDER says that “*Hinter den fingierten Druckortangabe ‘Romae’ verbirgt sich entweder Halle ..., oder Rostock ...*” (SCHRÖDER 1987, p. 84, fn. 299).

⁹⁸(Johann Franz BUDDÉ) (Ioannes Franciscus BUDDAEUS): “*Defensio Cabalae Ebraeorum contra Autores quosdam modernos*” in *Observationum selectarum ad rem litterariam spectantium tomus 1*: Halle ¹1700, *Observatio XVI*, pp. 207–231, especially §§ VIII–XIX, pp. 220–231 (see (BUDDÉ 1700a in bibliography). Second edition of the same text, under the same title(s) ²1725, *Observatio XVI*, pp. 198–220. See also the section on Adam Kadmon, of BUDDÉ's *Introductio in Historiam Philosophiae Ebraeorum*, Halle ¹1702 (cf. § XLIII, footnote *q*, especially pp. 320–323, where he challenges WACHTER; see BUDDÉ 1702 in bibliography).

⁹⁹In the eye of the modern reader, BUDDÉ's short defence of the Jewish Cabbala (directed mainly against Th. BURNET's *Archaeologiae philosophiae* and WACHTER's *Der Spinozismus im Jüdenthumb*) appears as a sober-minded, impartial philosophical analysis of some fundamental concepts of medieval and early modern Cabbala. BUDDÉ's *Introduction to the History of Jewish Philosophy* is a work of erudition, which consists of a historical and a systematic part. The historical part dedicates considerable attention to Cabbala, both Jewish and Christian. It offers a particularly systematic overview of the Jewish Cabbalistic sources (§ XXXII, footnote *t*; pp. 143–159), and of H. MORE's life work (§ XXXV, footnote *b*; pp. 210–232) etc.

¹⁰⁰Cf. FRIEDMANN's opinion on this change of attitude: “*Entre son premier et son troisième livre, elle (scil. l'interprétation de WACHTER sur le spinozisme) avait changé de tout au tout.*” (FRIEDMANN, chapter VII: *Spinoza vu à travers J. G. Wächter et la Cabale (1706)*, p. 206.)

¹⁰¹WACHTER: *Elucidarius Cabalisticus, Praefatio ad Lectorem*, pp. 12–13. Cf. further his recognition that he had utterly misunderstood Cabbala and Spinozism alike in his first book, *Der Spinozismus im Jüdenthumb, Oder die ... Vergötterte Welt*: “*... quod in tractatu meo Amstelodamensi, contra Philosophiam Hebraeorum edito, sub titulo: Die vergötterte Welt: atrociores quam opus erat, querelas contra Cabalam & Ebraeos immiscui, quodque eandem Philosophiam in Mose Germano, ejusque parallelismum in Spinoza (autore ut verum fatear, tum temporis cum ob subtilitatem tum ob popularia praejudicia mihi perversissime imo minime intellecto) sic impugnavi, ut impugnari vicissim ab aliis jure merito possim.*” (*Ibid.*, p. 13; roman characters and small capitals by WACHTER, underlining added.)

explains how Cabbala, this “*cautious and circumspect communication of secrets*” (“*provida & circumspecta secretorum communicatio*”) could secretly spread; while chapter three, *De corpore doctrinae Cabalisticæ* is a somewhat cursory (14-page-long) review of the Cabbalistic philosophical doctrines which WACHTER found most significant for his purposes.¹⁰² In the context of our study, chapter four, *De consensu Cabalæ et Spinozæ* is of capital importance, as WACHTER here proposes a list of the Cabbalistic philosophical topics or motifs (*specimina*) he conceives as having an affinity with SPINOZA'S position on related matters. Of high interest to us are points IX (an interpretation of the Spinozistic doctrine concerning the unicity of substance), as well as XII, which is a documented, but doubtful, philosophical demonstration that Spinozism can not be reduced to the *anima mundi* hypothesis. Finally, chapter five, *Quid de Cabala sentiendum* argues that Cabbala as a philosophical system does not pose a jeopardy to Christian thought and religion in public higher education either.

On the whole, WACHTER'S intellectual approach to philosophical Cabbala is cautious and circumspect. He claims to offer an impartial exposition and interpretation only, nothing more;¹⁰³ but as we have just mentioned, he ultimately suggests that Cabbalistic studies be introduced to the “Christian commonwealth” (at least to faculties of philosophy):

... for my part, I do not hesitate to propose that philosophical Cabbala, within its boundaries ... be tolerated in the Christian community, in so far as it does not intend to bias Christian theology nor to attack public religion.¹⁰⁴

Next, as far as the philosophical interpretation of Spinozism is concerned, WACHTER, unlike BAYLE, clearly misunderstands or misinterprets some of SPINOZA'S most

¹⁰² The author of the most authoritative and detailed philosophical and historical analysis of WACHTER'S *Elucidarius*, W. SCHRÖDER points out that in the *Elucidarius*, “*Die Darstellung der Kabbala ist derart oberflächlich und lückenhaft, daß der »Elucidarius« weder der Sache nach als Abriss der Kabbala gelten kann, noch von seinem Verfasser als solcher intendiert gewesen sein dürfte. Die These vom Einfluß der Kabbala auf Spinoza ist zu deutlich auf dessen Rehabilitierung hin entfaltet, als daß Wächters Bekenntnis zum Desinteressement des Historikers zu trauen wäre. ... Der »Elucidarius cabalisticus« trägt seinen Titel zu Unrecht: Selbst an dem damals verfügbaren Wissen über die jüdische Mystik und Theosophie gemessen, kann von einer »Erhellung« auch nur der wesentlichsten kabbalistischen Lehren nicht die Rede sein.*” (SCHRÖDER 1987, pp. 84 and 87.)

¹⁰³ Cf. the last sentence of the preface to the reader: “... *me sequentium Mysteriorum non Assertorem, sed nudum tantum interpretem & expositorem esse, adeoque errores, si qui postea occurrent, non mihi, sed Cabalæis eorumque sequacibus tribuendos esse.*” (*Ibid.*, p. 14.) There is a similar statement at the end of the *Epistola dedicatória*, p. 4.

¹⁰⁴ “... *ego jam nullus pronunciare dubito, Cabalam si Philosophia sit, intra cancellos suos ... sed tamen in Rep. Christiana tolerandam esse, quatenus nullum sibi in Theologiam arrogat imperium, & Religionem publice receptam non impugnat.*” (Part V, point III: “*Cabalam posse ob easdem rationes, ex quibus veteres eandem in Scholam non admiserunt, sub quadam Cautela hodie tolerari*”, *ibid.*, p. 74. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) WACHTER explicitly discusses the admission of Cabbala to faculties of philosophy in part V, point I: “*An Kabala a nobis exposita possit in Scholis & Academiis (saltem in Facultate Philosophica) tolerari ?*” (*Ibid.*, p. 71.)

fundamental metaphysical doctrines.¹⁰⁵ For a start, he proposes that SPINOZA, convinced by Cabbalistic arguments, actually acknowledged the divinity of Christ, and accepted the truth of the 'universal Christian religion':

*Among whom I must name Benedict de Spinoza, a Jew of Portuguese origin, who, by virtue of arguments taken from Jewish philosophy, acknowledged the divinity of Christ and, together with it, the truth of the universal Christian religion ...*¹⁰⁶

The wording ("universal Christian religion") of this historically mistaken claim (see our rationale below, in footnote) would appear to be a reference to J. JELLES's *Confessions of the General and Christian Religion (Belydenisse des Allgemeenen en Christelyken Geloofs, 1684)*.¹⁰⁷ WACHTER could have known of this book from BAYLE's article on SPINOZA, which reported literally SPINOZA's appreciative comment on JELLES's book (cf. "agnovit" above).¹⁰⁸ But, in any case, the SPINOZA-article of the *Dictionaire* is a source that on several points advances the precarious hypothesis of SPINOZA's conversion to Christianity.¹⁰⁹ Yet another possible source of WACHTER's peculiar claim is the *Praefatio*, by JELLES and RIEUWERTSZ, of the *Opera posthuma*,

¹⁰⁵ On this, cf. W. SCHRÖDER's well-considered judgment: "Bereits Wachers Ausführungen zum Fundament der spinozanischen Metaphysik, dem Begriff der göttlichen Substanz, führen vor Augen, wie weit er tatsächlich von einem korrekten Referat entfernt ist. ... Spinozismus ist aus Wachers Sicht idealistischer Monismus. In der Spiritualität der Substanz und der aus ihr hervorgegangenen Wirklichkeit, die er durch korrekte Analyse der Ethik erschlossen zu haben glaubt, erblickt Wacher überdies einen Verweis auf die Tradition, in der er Spinoza stehen sah: Auch die Kabbala ist Geistmetaphysik (...). ... Die Metaphysik der Ethik wird als Emanationstheorie verstanden ... Nicht inhaltliche Innovationen sind aus Wachers Sicht das Novum des Systems der Ethik, sondern seine Form: Spinozismus ist der zeitgemäße, den Standards systematischen Philosophierens entsprechende Version jener Geistmetaphysik, die im Neuplatonismus und in der Kabbala ihre obsolet gewordene Gestaltung erfahren hatte ... etc." (SCHRÖDER 1987, pp. 91, 92, 93 and 101.)

¹⁰⁶ "Quos inter memorandus mihi est Benedictus de spinoza, e gente Lusitana Judaeus, qui ex Philosophiae hujus (scil. philosophiae Hebraeorum) rationibus divinitatem christi, atque una veritatem universae Religionis Christianae agnovit ..." (Ibid., *Praefatio ad Lectorem*, p. 7. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

¹⁰⁷ For the modern critical edition of JELLES's *Beleydenisse* ..., see bibliography under SPRUIT ed.

¹⁰⁸ Footnote Y of the SPINOZA-article of BAYLE's *Dictionaire* communicated a Latin translation of SPINOZA's brief note on JELLES's book, as follows: "Domine ac amice Clarissime: scripta tua ad me missa cum voluptate perlegi, ac talia inveni, ut nihil in iis mutare possim." (Part of) the Dutch original survives in RIEUWERTSZ's postscript to JELLES's *Belydenisse* ...: "Ik heb met vermaak UE. Schriften overgelezen, en zoodanig bevonden, dat ik 'er niets in kan veranderen." (№ XLVIII bis in GEBHARDT's edition, vol. IV, p. 237; not included in the OP.) All considered, however, this evaluation by SPINOZA, of JELLES is of hardly any philosophical consequence in the interpretation of the mature metaphysical system of Spinozism. For a complete presentation of the history of the letter, see GEBHARDT's comments, vol. IV, pp. 416–417.

¹⁰⁹ Towards the end of the main text of the SPINOZA-article, BAYLE says that "Je viens d'apprendre une chose assez curieuse, c'est que depuis qu'il eut renoncé à la profession du Judaïsme, il professa ouvertement l'Évangile, & fréquenta les Assemblées des Mennonites, ou celles des Arminiens d'Amsterdam." Again, before this passage, in footnote I, BAYLE cites the account about SPINOZA, of a S. KORTHOLT, who writes that SPINOZA "Se professus est Christianum, & vel Reformatorum vel Lutheranorum coetibus non modo ipse adfuit, sed & aliis auctor saepenumero & hortator

which is a detailed apology of Spinozism and an attempt of reconciliation between it and the Christian religion, first and foremost based upon a comparison of the Apostolic moral doctrine with SPINOZA'S parallel ethical conclusions in the *Ethica*. But, though SPINOZA in his early years did, in fact, attend the meetings of free evangelical communities like the Mennonites and the Collegiants,¹¹⁰ and had lifelong friendship with members of such congregations like, e.g., J. JELLES, it remains true that in doctrinal respects, a logically-ontologically insuperable contradiction exists between SPINOZA'S mature concept of God as the single infinite substance of the universe of all existing things, on the one hand, and the historically conceived doctrine of the trinitarian divinity of Christ, the dogma of the incarnation of the Word of God and that of redemption and resurrection, on the other hand. Hence, as far as the historical SPINOZA is concerned, all possible 'evidence' WACHTER could refer to in favour of his thesis on SPINOZA'S profession of Christian faith is philosophically invalidated, in particular by epistle OP № XXI in a Christological respect,¹¹¹ and by the systematic metaphysics of book one of the *Ethica*, in a general theological respect.

extitit, ut templa frequentarent, domesticisque verbi quosdam divini praecones maximopere commendavit ..." There is the same passage from fact to fiction in both these accounts; for although it is a historical fact that SPINOZA in his youth frequented the assemblies of free Christian denominations, it seems *fiction* that he professed the Gospel in either of these communities, or that he actually converted himself to the Christian religion (see FREUDENTHAL, *Erster Teil*, pp. 62–66).

¹¹⁰ On the 'Rijnsburger Collegianten', see SPRUIT, pp. xxiii–xxxiv.

¹¹¹ SPINOZA in the third part of this letter to OLDENBURG (on which see our Section 1) asserts that God revealed His wisdom to the greatest extent in the person of Christ: "... *haec sapientia* (Dei) *per Jesum Christum maxime manifestata fuit ...*" This statement, then, is accompanied by another which philosophically excludes that SPINOZA could acknowledge the trinitarian-redemptorian divinity of Christ conceived as the incarnate Word of God. Namely, the closing paragraph of the letter says "*Caeterum quod quaedam Ecclesiae his addunt, quod Deus naturam humanam assumpsit, monui expresse, me, quid dicant, nescire; imo, ut verum fatear, non minus absurde mihi loqui videntur, quam si quis mihi diceret, quod circulus naturam quadrati induerit.*" Hence, SPINOZA in the afore-cited statement about the highest manifestation of divine wisdom in Christ simply considers Christ as the most perfect human mind, cf. "... *sed de aeterno illo filio Dei, hoc est, Dei aeterna sapientia, quae sese in omnibus rebus, & maxime in Mente humana, & omnium maxime in Christo Jesu manifestavit, longe aliter sentiendum.*" Thus for SPINOZA, the "eternal son of God" ('*aeternus ille filius Dei*', 'een Zone van God' in the *Korte verhandeling*, I/9) is divine wisdom ('*sapientia Dei*'). We may philosophically identify this with what SPINOZA calls the *idea Dei* or *intellectus Dei* in other texts. This is in a sense certainly the divine Λόγος, which is, however, never identified by SPINOZA with the (historical) person of Jesus Christ. In Spinozan terminology, the "eternal son of God" refers not to the numerically single substance of God itself, but to an infinite immediate *modus* in the divine attribute of *cogitatio*. This infinite immediate *modus* as a whole is composed of the finite *modi*, the particular human minds as its parts. So in letter OP № XXI, SPINOZA only says that the infinite immediate *modus* of the attribute of cogitation of God as the single substance, is best expressed in the finite *modus* which was the mind of Christ. Hence Christ for SPINOZA may be the most perfect possible manifestation of divine wisdom in a human mind, but not a person of the Holy Trinity, or the resurrected, both human and divine, Redeemer (all citations from epistle OP № XXI; ÁJELLES and RIEUWERTSZ, eds.), p. 450). See also BRETON'S outstanding analysis of SPINOZA'S philosophical interpretation of the person of Christ. As he puts it in summary, "*Il serait donc aussi ridicule, me semble-t-il, d'y* (scil. in '*la lecture christologique de Spinoza*') *voir une simple captation de bienveillance qu'une adhésion tacite au christianisme.*" BRETON, however, does not explicitly discuss epistle OP № XXI (= GEBHARDT № LXXIII; BRETON 1977, pp. 82–86).

Second, WACHTER proffers an equally erroneous philosophical interpretation when he claims to prove that Spinozism is anti-materialist metaphysics, which posits the existence of a unique *spiritual* substance throughout the universe (Chapter IV, point IX):

*Hence, according to Spinoza, there is no matter in the universe. Whatever there is, is an absolutely excellent thing, i.e., as the Cabbalists call it, spirit. ... Therefore, the substance of the universe is, in Spinoza's opinion, spirit ... This will become clearer if we consider that which he repeatedly calls to our minds ..., that mind and body are one and the same thing, expressed in two different modes and ... that the thinking substance and the extended substance are one and the same substance, which is known now under the attribute of cogitation, now under that of extension. ... But if cogitation and extension are the attributes of one single substance, how can we conceive of them as such if cogitation and extension do not coincide in a common nature, that is, in the spiritual nature? Hence, according to Spinoza, the substance of the universe is spirit, and this spirit has two attributes, cogitation and extension, and these have two modes, mind and body. ... because he cherished this conception in his mind, that extension is just as spiritual as cogitation.*¹¹²

WACHTER arrives at this conclusion by a deduction from SPINOZA'S concept of God as the absolutely infinite being ('*Ensoph*', '*Deus in se spectatus*'), which invariably tends to manifest Its inexhaustible internal riches in the manifold forms of external reality. WACHTER affirms that this concept philosophically grounds the supposition that God produced the world not out of *nihil*, but out of Its own essence. He rightly points out, further, that SPINOZA denies the creation of matter (cf. *Ethica*, pars I, proposition XV, *schol.*). On the basis of this argument, he then sets up the following interpretative alternative: *either* we take SPINOZA to mean that God produced the world from Its essence *understood as an absolutely spiritual entity*, in which case the effect, i.e., the world, must be likewise pure spiritual substance; *or* we take him to mean that as the effect of God's production is material, the efficient cause, i.e., God, must also be material. At this point, WACHTER argues that the second option is just unthinkable, since it is 'impossible' that SPINOZA should have conceived of God as material: "*Shall we think, then, that Spinoza conceived of a material God?*

¹¹²"*Nulla igitur juxta Spinozam in universo Materia est, sed quidquid est, res funditus praestantissima est, id est, uti Cabalaei vocant, Spiritus. ... Erit ergo universonum Substantia juxta Spinozam Spiritus ... Id ipsum magis patebit, si attendamus ad ea, quae nobis subinde in memoriam revocat ..., quod mens & corpus una eademque res sint, duobus tantum modis expressa, &... quod substantia cogitans & substantia extensa, una eademque substantia sint, quae jam sub cogitationis, jam sub extensionis attributo cognoscitur. ... Atqui si cogitatio & extensio duo sint unius substantiae attributa, quo pacto id concipiemus, si cogitatio & extensio non convenient in natura communi, hoc est Spirituali? Est igitur omnino universonum substantia spiritus juxta Spinozam, hujusque Spiritus duo sunt attributa, cogitatio & extensio, horumque attributorum duo modi, mens & Corpus. ... quia scilicet hunc animo fovit conceptum, Extensionem rem aequae Spiritualem esse ac cogitationem.*" (WACHTER: *Elucidarius Cabalisticus*, caput IV: *De consensu Cabalae et Spinozae*, point IX: *Specimen Sextum*; pp. 46–47. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, small capitals by WACHTER; bracketed references to footnotes indicating passages in the *Ethica* have been left out.)

Not at all. On the contrary, he denied all matter, and he kept the word only, after having bereaved it of its vulgar meaning."¹¹³

Needless to say, this is begging the question. One radical novelty of SPINOZA'S concept of God is precisely that God, the single existing substance, is extended. Extension (and, thereby, corporeality) is one attribute among the infinitely many which manifest inexhaustible being, the efficient but not transitive, hence, immanent and material cause of the world. That the world of material-corporeal extension, and that of cogitation, are real manifestations (expressions) of God, follows from SPINOZA'S principal metaphysical thesis of the absolute unicity of substance.

Thus, ultimately, WACHTER, much like ÖTINGER, is ready to abandon, or at least to suspend, the ecclesiastically endorsed dogma of *creatio ex nihilo* but he, again just like ÖTINGER, systematically refrains from accepting the potentially related, allegedly atheistic thesis concerning the materiality of God. Essentially, WACHTER displays a philosophical preference for the cosmological theory of emanation (*'rerum omnium ortus ex Deo'*),¹¹⁴ but he will sooner distort SPINOZA'S original theological intuition than go as far as positing together with him the materiality of God. May we not call this tendency a 'forced baptism' of SPINOZA?

This essentially biased presentation of Spinozism serves as a premiss by which WACHTER will demonstrate the philosophical incompatibility of SPINOZA'S theology with the *anima mundi* hypothesis. So far, WACHTER has explained, by a vicious circle, that SPINOZA'S concept of God is that of an '*immaterial and excellent nature, i.e., spirit, whose attributes are infinite, immaterial and spiritual cogitation and extension*' (*'immaterialis ac praestantissima natura, Spiritus, cujus attributa sunt cogitatio & extensio infinita immaterialis & spiritualis'*),¹¹⁵ and that there exists absolutely no matter (*materia*) in the universe since God 'created' the universe out of Its own, thoroughly spiritual essence. Consequently, adds WACHTER, the entire existing spiritual universe is ontologically situated within God, according to SPINOZA: "*Whatever is, is in God*" ("*Quicquid est, in Deo est*").¹¹⁶ Some things are, further, immediate, others mediate, outflows of divine essence, whereby each particular constituent of the universe is a more or less remote modification of God'S immaterial substance in the hierarchical scale of being.¹¹⁷ It is, then, in this

¹¹³"*Quid ergo, DEUMne materiam statuit (scil. SPINOZA)? absit. Sed materiam uti vides, plane abnegavit, & vocabulum tantum, a significatione vulgi purgatum, retinuit.*" (*Ibid.*, point VIII: *Specimen Quintum*, p. 46. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) To be sure, there are no references to SPINOZA'S original texts in this concluding section of WACHTER'S argument for SPINOZA'S immaterialism. Our reconstruction of the premisses of that argument concerns points V–VIII, pp. 44–46.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, point I: *Spinoza partem Cabalae systematice tractavit*, p. 40 (not a literal citation). Since WACHTER has allegedly pointed out the absurdity of either the creation, or the existence, of matter under points VI–VII, he cannot but agree with the proposition that "... *DEUM rerum omnium origines ex se ipso propriisque quasi visceribus adinvenisse ...*" (p. 48).

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, point X: *Specimen Septimum*; p. 47 (not a literal citation).

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 48 (WACHTER'S citation from the *Ethica, pars I*, proposition XV).

¹¹⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, point XI: *Specimen Octavum*; pp. 49–50.

connection that WACHTER comes to the discussion of the philosophical relationship between Spinozism and the world soul theory, under point XII.

This point starts from the alleged philosophical parallellism there is between Cabbalistical and Spinozistic pananimism.¹¹⁸ Even the Cabbala teaches, suggests WACHTER, that “*God made a living and animate world*” (“*DEUM produxisse Mundum vividum & animatum*”),¹¹⁹ in the sense that every particular thing is animated to a degree proportional with the position it occupies in the scale of being:

*Since, as they teach, there is no matter in the universe, it is clear that there is no death either. All things, though they do look dead, are animate in several different degrees. Tatian teaches this expressly ... as he says that a spirit fills up the stars, angels, plants, waters, human beings, animals and that although it is one and the same still it also displays difference. This learned man ... openly confesses that he borrowed this doctrine from Jewish philosophy.*¹²⁰

Cabbalistic pananimism, suggests WACHTER, boils down to the position of a single vivifying all-pervasive universal spirit. WACHTER does not fail to notice the literal correspondence between how he himself has formulated the Cabbalistic thesis and the familiar passage in *Ethica* II/XIII, schol. (“*omnia, quamvis diversis gradibus, animata tamen sunt*”). Thus, he next poses the question if we may discover the position of a single vivifying spirit in SPINOZA’S pananimism as well. He formulates his query in the form of an exclusive disjunction: is Spinozism to be interpreted as a theory of a *Spiritus Mundi*, or rather as one of an *anima mundi*? WACHTER then proposes that Spinozism is philosophically identical with a *Spiritus Mundi* theory, but rejects its identification with the *anima mundi*-theory, as follows:

But since a spirit of the world can be conceived of in two different manners, i.e., in the manner of the Jews and in that of the Egyptians & anima mundi theory they act properly who interpret Spinoza’s words according to the Cabbala and in the sense of what has just been expounded. Because in Spinoza, I have never read that the world is a living being or that God, being inseparable from matter, is the soul of the world or; again, that He is unable to operate without pre-existent matter. Nay, readers will easily notice that these theses cannot stand together with what he writes elsewhere. Despite this, a learned man attributed these propositions to Spinoza,¹²¹ in pages 345f of the first tome of the 21st

¹¹⁸ For an authoritative critical analysis of the relationship between historical Spinozism and Jewish philosophical Cabbala, see SCHOLEM (1984).

¹¹⁹ “*DEUM produxisse Mundum vividum & animatum, recepta Cabalaeorum doctrina est, & manifesta ex antecedentibus sequela.*” (*Ibid.*, point XII: *Specimen Nonum*; p. 50.)

¹²⁰ “*Nam cum nulla, uti tradunt, in universo materia sit, mors utique nulla est, sed omnia utcumque videantur mortua, erunt diversis gradibus animata. Hoc docet Tatianus diserte, ... Spiritus, inquis, inest stellis, angelis, stirpibus, aquis, hominibus, animalibus, & quamvis unus & idem sit, differentiam tamen in se habet. Quod illum ab Ebraeorum Philosophia mutuatum esse, fatetur ... Vir Doctus.*” (*Ibid.* Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting by WACHTER.)

¹²¹ This “erudite man” is probably J. Fr. BUDDE, to whom *Observatio XXI: De Guilielmo Postello* is attributable in *Observationum selectarum ad rem litterariam spectantium tomus 1*, 1700 (see (BUDDEÑ 1700b in bibliography). WACHTER, who is aware that *Observatio XVI: Defensio Cabalae Ebraeorum* ... is a work of BUDDE’S (cf. p. 8 of the *Elucidarius Cabalisticus*), refrains from naming him here (both contributions of BUDDE’S were published anonymously). Now *Observatio XXI* is a

*Observations, but he did not care to indicate in which work or in which page we can read about this error of Spinoza.*¹²²

Here WACHTER argues that the *Spiritus Mundi* theory in its Hebrew (i.e., Cabbalistic) version is a correct interpretation of Spinozism. It is important to see that under point XII of chapter III, he has already used the concept of *Spiritus Mundi* with apparent reference to the trinitarian Holy Spirit. There he suggested that the *Spiritus Mundi* is the spirit of the One 'who animated the world'.¹²³ It seems, therefore, that he conceives of the trinitarian Holy Spirit as the all-pervasive unitary vivifying spirit he attributes to the Cabbala, and that now he further attributes it to SPINOZA. So Spinozism, says WACHTER, may be interpreted as implicitly applying the concept of the Holy Spirit in the metaphysical role of an all-pervasive vivifying spirit of the entirely immaterial world, the *Spiritus Mundi*. This interpretation wants to bring Cabbalistic theology and Spinozism near to Christian trinitarian theology. On the other hand, continues WACHTER, Spinozism may *not* be interpreted as a version of the *anima mundi*-theory inasmuch as it does

study about the religious and philosophical doctrines of the celebrated Renaissance philosopher Guillaume POSTEL, translator of part of the *Zohar* (see Section 1 of Chapter 8). Throughout his study, BUDE, much in the latitudinarian vein he applied in his writings on Jewish philosophy, strives to acquit POSTEL of the charge of atheism, heresy and fanaticism, by systematically showing how POSTEL defended essential Christian dogmas, like, e.g., that of the Trinity, in his several works. In § XIII of *De Guiljelmo Postello*, BUDE cites POSTEL's opinion about the intramundaneity of God from POSTEL's *Rationes Spiritus S. qui Parisiis prodiit* (1543): "{»}Magni, inquit, fuere semper errores circa summum bonum, bonique fontem, sed primus & valde nefarius est impiorum negantium, vlla prouidentia regi mundum, eumque caussam extra se habere inficiantium.{«}" It is in the context of this 'heresy' that BUDE situates the Spinozistic doctrine, saying that POSTEL could foresee the appearance of Spinozism because Spinozism is essentially identical with the ancient doctrine of '*Deus anima mundi*': "*Imo videtur (POSTELLUS) eam impietatem, quam Benedictus Spinoza postea in scenam aperte produxit, praeuidisse, & praeuidere potuit, cum reuera antiquus ille Spinozae error sit, antiquis philosophis, qui DEUM animam mundi statuebant, communis: {»}facessat ergo impietas cum animali suo mundo, quae mauult impactum DEUM materiae credere & impotentem, ut sine materia ad agendum consistat, quam, quod est in omnibus creaturis manifestum DEI vestigium agnoscere.{«}"* ((BUDE) 1700b, pp. 345–346; roman characters by BUDE.) BUDE thus supposes, very soon (1700) after BAYLE (1697; see Sections 4 and 5), that Spinozism as a metaphysical system is essentially the 'strong' *anima mundi* theory.

¹²²"*Verum cum Spiritus Mundi duobus modis explicari possit, vel secundum Hebraeos vel secundum Aegyptios, illi aequissime faciunt, qui Spinozae verba ad normam Cabalae & tenorem praecedentium explicant. Nam Mundum esse animal, & DEUM animam Mundi materiae impactam, & sine materia praeeistente ad operandum impotentem, nusquam a Spinoza proditum lego, quin haec cum illis quae alibi ab eo traduntur, consistere neutiquam posse, Lectores ejus facile animadvertunt. Tribuit tamen hanc sententiam Spinozae vir quidam literatus, Tom. I. obs. XXI, p. 345. seq. sed quo libro aut qua pagina hunc ejus errorem legamus, citare praetermisit.*" (*Ibid.*, p. 51. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, small capitals and other highlighting by WACHTER; underlining added.)

¹²³"... *notandum, quod Messias sit ipse λόγος aeternus, non ille Deo internus, sed hic prolatitius, de quo supra, & hunc dici stylo Cabalístico Messiam, quod Spiritu Sancto unctus, animatus, & agitatus est, qui proinde etiam Spiritus Mundi Cabalaeis dicitur, quia est Spiritus ejus qui Mundum animavit.*" (*Ibid.*, chapter III, point XII: *De Anima & Corpore Messiae*; p. 38.) There is some syntactic doubt as to which person of the Trinity (whether to the Son or the Holy Spirit) WACHTER wants to designate with the "*qui*" in the second part of the sentence, but on semantic grounds, it seems more reasonable to relate it to the Holy Spirit.

not posit the existence of material substance, without the position of which the *anima mundi*-theory is unconceivable, since the concept of an *anima* logically necessitates the position of a material *corpus*.

Hence, the entire refutation of the identification of Spinozism with the *anima mundi*-theory depends logically on an immaterialistic and Christian theological–spiritological misinterpretation of Spinozism. At the same time, WACHTER is, to be sure, right when he refers to the philological fact that SPINOZA actually never advances the *anima mundi* hypothesis (“*nuspiam a Spinoza proditum lego*”). It is eventually in this manner that WACHTER draws, as it were, a *historically* correct conclusion (Spinozism is not to be identified with the *anima mundi*-theory) from premisses (immaterialistic interpretation of the Spinozan concept of God) from which it *philosophically* does not follow.

In the rest (points XIII–XXIV) of chapter four of the *Elucidarius Cabalisticus*, WACHTER further compares with Cabbala SPINOZA's doctrines on the attributes of God, fatality, *amor intellectualis* toward God, etc., with a noticeable philosophical emphasis on the mystically tinged Spinozistic thesis, “*the human mind is a part of the infinite intellect of God*” (“*Mentem Humanam Partem Esse Infiniti Intellectus Dei*”).¹²⁴ All considered, one might say that the *Elucidarius Cabalisticus* is a philosophically unconvincing interpretation of Spinozism, based on first-hand knowledge of both the *Opera posthuma*, and ancient as well as modern Cabbalistic sources, but biased by a (noble) intention of philosophical reconciliation between Spinozism, on the one hand, and trinitarian dogma as well as a broadly conceived Christian onto-theology (God as the ontological prop of existence) on the other. This reconciliation often comes just short of a philosophical baptism of SPINOZA's speculative theology and Hebrew Cabbala in general, but seems always stimulated by a candid, if sometimes naïve, hermeneutical effort, which, ultimately, fatally dissolves the philosophical specificity of a different position instead of intuiting its essence. Despite this, it remains true that WACHTER correctly noticed the lack of philological evidence for the identification of Spinozism with the *anima mundi*-theory even though he gave a philosophically inconclusive, tendentious rationale for it.

7 LEIBNIZ'S Confrontation with WACHTER and SPINOZA, in His *Animadversiones ad Joh. Georg. Wachteri librum de Recondita Hebraeorum Philosophia* (approx. 1706–1710), in Connection with the *Anima mundi*-Theory

However WACHTER may have misrepresented the metaphysical essence of Spinozism, his interpretation of that system, expounded in the *Cabbalistic Enlightener*, was carefully studied and commented on by LEIBNIZ sometime in the years 1706–1710.¹²⁵ Decades before that, when LEIBNIZ had personally met and

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, point XV: *Specimen Duodecimum*; p. 54.

¹²⁵ Datation by FOUCHER DE CAREIL (FOUCHER DE CAREIL ed., *Avant-propos*, unnumbered page).

had discussions with SPINOZA in Den Haag in 1676 (shortly before SPINOZA'S death), LEIBNIZ had already been engaged with SPINOZA'S thought, but without an incisive knowledge of the *Ethica*, extant only in manuscript at that time. He thus had to content his philosophical curiosity with copies of some of SPINOZA'S epistles (among them, one to Lodewijk MEYER on infinity, OP № XXIX) and with the philosophical conversation(s) he had with SPINOZA probably more than once.¹²⁶

The publication of the *Elucidarius Cabalisticus* instigated LEIBNIZ to an in-depth study of that book, SPINOZA'S *Opera posthuma*, as well as other sources involved in the discussion of philosophical Cabbala. His renewed studies this time yielded the Hannover manuscript entitled, *Annotations on J. G. Wachter's Book on the Secret Philosophy of the Jews (Animadversiones ad J. G. Wachteri librum de recondita Hebraeorum philosophia)*, discovered and published by FOUCHER DE CAREIL in the middle of the nineteenth century.¹²⁷

In these notes, LEIBNIZ essentially follows the scheme of WACHTER'S book but he adds many personal elaborations that do not immediately go back to the *Elucidarius Cabalisticus*, especially at the beginning of his text. The identification of the passages of WACHTER'S book, which LEIBNIZ at any given point discusses, is generally not difficult, although there are hardly any explicit references in the manuscript to page or chapter numbers of the *Elucidarius*; only the key words in LEIBNIZ'S text can help. The manuscript, as it is, proves that LEIBNIZ, now, had a thorough acquaintance with all of SPINOZA'S philosophical works included in the *Opera posthuma (Ethica, Tractatus politicus, Tractatus de intellectus emendatione, Epistolae)*.¹²⁸

Right at the beginning of his analyses, LEIBNIZ is taken aback by, and voices doubts as to, WACHTER'S idea that SPINOZA acknowledged universal Christian religion.¹²⁹ But in a philosophical respect, the essential point of the manuscript is a confrontation with the primordial metaphysical concepts of Spinozism, as, e.g., *essentia, existentia, substantia, mens, anima*, etc. On encountering these in WACHTER'S presentation, LEIBNIZ systematically contrasts them with his own

¹²⁶ Cf. FRIEDMANN, chapter III: *Autour des visites à Spinoza (1676)*, pp. 106–122.

¹²⁷ For details about FOUCHER DE CAREIL'S edition, see bibliography. His transcription seems on many points imprecise, and contains a number of evident slips of the pen, while his French translation is sometimes prolix or incorrect. A modern edition of FOUCHER DE CAREIL'S *editio princeps* is found in SCHRÖDER ed., 1994b, together with WACHTER'S *Origines juris naturalis* and *Elucidarius Cabalisticus*, etc. An excellent *philosophical* analysis of LEIBNIZ'S notes on WACHTER is offered by FRIEDMANN, chapter VII: *Spinoza vu à travers J.-G. Wachter et la Cabale (1706)*; pp. 201–229.

¹²⁸ There is no reference, however, to the *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, so FOUCHER DE CAREIL is mistaken when he writes in the *Avant-propos* of his edition that “*Le Traité Theologico-Politique, celui de la Réforme de l'Entendement, les lettres mêmes de Spinoza sont cités; donc Leibniz connaît l'oeuvre entière du philosophe hollandais.*” (Citation from a page carrying no number.)

¹²⁹ “*Antiquissimam Hebraeorum philosophiam sectatus est Benedictus de Spinosa e gente Lusitana Judaeus nostro autoris judicio cui si credimus, Spinosa divinitatem Christi universae religionis agnovit. Sed miror quomodo hoc dici possit, cum autor agnoscat Christi resurrectionem a Spinosa negatam.*” (FOUCHER DE CAREIL ed., p. 2.)

definition and conception of the respective thing, whereby he challenges and rejects, first and foremost, SPINOZA's determinative metaphysical–theological insights concerning the unicity of substance, the law of necessity regulating divine nature, etc. Although his arguments are, as a rule, condensed to bare statements of position, he sometimes finds occasion to develop his metaphysical opinions more at length, like in the following passage, a crisp sketch of the Leibnizian doctrine of the relative ontological independence of compound substances, and of the *harmonia praestabilita*:

*In my opinion, any substance is an empire within an empire, one which is in a fine-tuned harmony with the other things. It does not receive any influence from any other thing except from God alone though it depends, by God, the author of things, on all other things. It derives immediately from God, still it comes to be in a way that it is coordinated with the rest of things ...*¹³⁰

The involved doctrine of the plurality of substances is the metaphysical context of LEIBNIZ's brief confrontation with the *anima mundi* hypothesis as well. He considers this hypothesis here in connection with WACHTER's reference to TATIAN who asserts that one single *spirit* fills up the bodily frame of every individual, celestial or earthly being as well as masses of homogenous matter. This *spiritus*, as a numerically one substrate, is then differently modified in each individual, to believe TATIAN. LEIBNIZ first cites from WACHTER, then comments on this '*Spiritus Mundi*' hypothesis, extending the discussion to the case of the *anima mundi*-theory as well (see our detailed analysis of WACHTER's text under the preceding Section 9):

*In his speech to the Greeks, Tatian says that a spirit fills up the stars, angels, plants, waters, human beings, animals and that although it is one and the same still it also displays differences. – But I reject this doctrine. It involves the erroneous idea of a soul of the world which is spread out throughout the world and which is like the air that produces different sounds in different organ-pipes. When the pipe has broken, the soul quits it and returns into the soul of the world.*¹³¹

LEIBNIZ, here, apparently puts the world soul theory in the same perspective as the one in which he represented it in the *Considerations sur la doctrine d'un Esprit Universel Unique* (see Section 1 of Chapter 2 and Section 5 of Chapter 3) in 1702. In the introduction of that text, as we may remember, he used the image of the same

¹³⁰“*Mea sententia quaelibet substantia est imperium in imperio, sed exacte rebus caeteris conspirans: nullum ab alio quocumque praeter Deum influxum accipit, sed tamen ab aliis omnibus (sed per Deum autorem) dependet: immediate a Deo prodit, et tamen aliis rebus consentanea producitur ...*” (FOUCHER DE CAREIL ed., p. 66. LEIBNIZ's reflection on chapter IV, point XX of WACHTER's book; p. 62. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

¹³¹“*Ait Tatianus in oratione ad Graecos spiritus inesse stellis angelis stirpibus aquis hominibus et quamvis unus et idem sit, differentias in se habet. Sed hanc ego doctrinam minus probo. Est error de anima mundi per idem ('throughout the same thing, i.e., the world') diffusa et quae instar aeris in organis pneumaticis pro diversis fistulis diversos sonos facit: ita fracta fistula cessabit illic anima redibitque in animam mundi.*” (FOUCHER DE CAREIL ed., p. 44. LEIBNIZ's reflection on chapter IV, point XII of WACHTER's book, p. 50. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting added.) The first sentence is an almost literal citation from WACHTER's text.

flurry of wind blowing through several different organ-pipes, producing so many different musical tones (“... *un même souffle de vent fait sonner différemment divers tuyaux d’orgue*”),¹³² when he described how a universal *spirit* is thought to produce the particular human *souls* as its transient effects. Here we find literally the same image of an air-operated organ and the same metaphor in which the breaking of an individual pipe refers to the decomposition of an individual organic body, and to the return of the correlated soul into the *spiritus universi* (“... *fracta fistula cessabit illic anima redibitque in animam mundi*”).

But LEIBNIZ'S laconic philosophical reaction against the idea of the universal soul here allows him to make a more specifically anti-Spinozistic invective than in the more general argument of the 1702 *Considerations*. In the *Animadversiones ad J. G. Wachteri librum*, the criticism of the concept of the world soul immediately ushers in a discussion of SPINOZA'S specific definition of the soul as an ever-changing, representative idea of its body, as follows:

*But we must be aware that there are as many incorporeal substances or, if you prefer, souls as there are natural organic machines. What Spinoza says, however, in proposition 13 of the Second Part of the Ethics, namely, that »everything is animate to some specific degree«, relies on another wonderful statement, in so far as he says that »of everything there necessarily exists in God an idea of which He is the cause in the same manner as He is the cause of the idea of the human body«. But it is completely alien to any semblance of truth that soul is an idea. Ideas are purely abstract things like numbers and geometrical forms, and they are unable to act. The ideas are abstract and universal; the idea of any living being expresses a mere possibility, and it is self-deceit to say that the souls are immortal because their ideas are eternal. This is as if we asserted that the soul of the globe is eternal because the idea of the spherical body is eternal. The soul is not an idea but the source of innumerable ideas, in so far as it has, besides the idea which it entertains, an active principle in itself, or the production of new ideas. But according to Spinoza, the soul will be different at any given moment, because as soon as the body has changed, its idea will change as well. Hence, it is no wonder that he considers the created things to be ephemeral modes. After all, the soul is a principle of life or is possessed of an active force.*¹³³

The only argument or, better, bare statement directed immediately against the *anima mundi* hypothesis here is a reference (in the first sentence of our citation) to the

¹³² GERHARDT C.I. ed., 1965, vol. VI, p. 529.

¹³³ “*Sed sciendum est tot esse substantias incorporeas, vel si mavis animas, quot sunt machinae organicae naturales. Sed quod ait Spinoza, Ethica P. 2, schol. proposition 13. Omnia quamvis diversis gradibus animata tamen sunt, alia mirabili sententia nititur, nam, inquit, cujusque rei datur necessario idea in Deo cujus Deus est causa eodem modo ac humani corporis idea. Sed plane ab omni specie rationis alienum animam esse ideam. Ideae sunt aliquid mere abstractum ut numeri et figurae nec agere possunt. Ideae sunt abstractae et universales: idea animalis cujusque est possibilitas, et illusio est animas immortales dicere, quia ideae sunt aeternae, quasi globi anima aeterna diceretur quia idea sphaerici corporis aeterna est. Anima non est idea, sed fons innumerabilium idearum. Habet enim praeter ideam praesentem activum aliquid seu productionem novarum idearum. At secundum Spinosam quovis momento alia erit anima quia mutato corpore alia est corporis idea. Hinc non mirum si creaturas pro modificationibus evanidis habet. Anima ergo est aliquid vitale seu continens vim activam.*” (FOUCHER DE CAREIL ed., pp. 44–46. LEIBNIZ'S reflection on chapter IV, point XII of WACHTER'S book, pp. 50–51. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) LEIBNIZ'S citations from SPINOZA (or, better, immediately from WACHTER) have been marked off by roman characters.

metaphysical doctrine of the plurality of incorporeal substances, or 'souls': as many conveniently disposed, organic natural structures (*machinae*), so many souls, says LEIBNIZ. Experience does entitle us to identify, in the phenomenal world, individuals, which are rendered individual by their intrinsic principle of unity, i.e., the 'soul' conceived as an internal representation of external reality and as an active substantial form. This concept for LEIBNIZ's intuition (though perhaps not necessarily for systematic thought) precludes the existence of a world soul. Thus, albeit LEIBNIZ's initial wording "*hanc ego doctrinam minus probo*" ("*I am less inclined to approve of this doctrine*") seems to announce a *less* severe, or at least, softened, philosophical judgment on the *anima mundi*, the hypothesis of the universal soul is finally discarded by virtue of LEIBNIZ's fundamental ontological conviction that it is impossible that there be only one common *substantia simplex* which informs all material reality as a universal substantial form. Each phenomenally identifiable individual has its specific *nature* (a coordinated whole of essential attributes and characteristic activities), which, logically, has to be determined by a *particular* internal form – this is the ontological platform from which LEIBNIZ is not ready to move in this relatively late text of his.

On the other hand, the argument against the world soul theory from the necessity of individual *moral responsibility* is not voiced at all now. LEIBNIZ is, as it were, in a hurry to face SPINOZA's specific definition of the soul.

As the second *sed* in our citation reveals, he is aware that SPINOZA's pananimistic statement does not logically rely on the hypothesis of the universal soul, but on SPINOZA's specific concept of soul. Hereby, LEIBNIZ may be implicitly criticizing the logic of WACHTER's presentation (in which the mention of the *spiritus mundi* thesis is linked up directly with the discussion of SPINOZA's pananimism). At the same time, he may also be suggesting that Spinozism is not philosophically to be identified with the *anima mundi*-theory (although the earlier, 1702 *Considerations* openly propose the opposite). Then, as a more or less logical development on the query about the world soul, LEIBNIZ criticizes the passivity or passibility (mere receptivity) of the "*idea*" constituting the Spinozan soul, saying that SPINOZA commits a category mistake when he takes the soul to be an *idea*, and not a *source of ideas*.

The soul, as LEIBNIZ here sees it, does not simply represent an internal or external state of things but also autonomously *generates* a constant flow of ideas or individual thoughts. For SPINOZA, insinuates LEIBNIZ, the soul is mechanically determined by the internal condition of the body, so it is entirely passible or receptive. But, in reality, SPINOZA certainly does not deny that there *are* particular ideas of perception within the soul, which is the sum total (an *idea idearum*, as it were) of every such particular idea, as they are coordinated under the principle of the unity of apperception, and ordered together to form a higher representative unit in the divine intellect.

As LEIBNIZ insists on this particular psychological point, he seems to neglect a major complementary facet of SPINOZA's doctrine of the soul as well, namely, that we may improve the moral quality of our souls by the emendation of our respective intellects, to the effect that we become more and more united with God by an intellectual love toward It – which, for SPINOZA, constitutes the essence of human freedom. As is made explicit also by the *Tractatus de intellectus emendatione* (a work LEIBNIZ refers

to in his *Animadversiones*), the individual mind can 'guide itself' ("*seipsam dirigere*") actively, and by its intrinsic cognitive power, toward the *idea vera* (in particular, the *idea entis perfectissimi*), and, by obtaining an *optima perceptio* of it, it realizes the paramount degree of beatitude ("*summum bonum*") for itself. While the acquisition of an adequate idea of the eternal and infinite thing, '*res aeterna & infinita*', is identical with an intellectual love towards, and a mystical union with God, the mind still continues, says SPINOZA, to supply itself, by the normative-generative use of this idea of God, with clear and distinct ideas of the uncreated immutables (the attributes of God), as well as of the finite mutable things. To say, then, that this *cognitive optimism* of SPINOZA does not attribute "*an active principle or the production of new ideas*" ("*activum aliquid seu productionem novarum idearum*") to the soul, seems philosophically unjustified. To SPINOZA'S mind, it is precisely by this progression toward a better understanding of, and an ultimate unification with, *natura*, that the essential cognitive and moral activity of the soul is deployed, in view of an active perfection of the quality of human life.¹³⁴

But LEIBNIZ is not ready philosophically to acknowledge SPINOZA'S cognition-based doctrine of the *amor intellectualis erga Deum*. Later in his notes, he qualifies it in the following, completely unfair terms: "*what Spinoza says concerning the intellectual love for God (Ethics, part 4, proposition 28)*¹³⁵ *is but trappings for the people, in so far as this God, who produces every good and bad thing necessarily, without any distinction, is not worthy of love at all ...*"¹³⁶

It is ultimately utterly superficial again when LEIBNIZ draws the conclusion, on the basis of his considerations so far, that it is "*no wonder that Spinoza regards created things as ephemeral modes*" ("*non mirum si creaturas pro modificationibus evanidis habet*"; see citation above). The individual soul, which is, for SPINOZA, an *idea* in God'S mind, *intellectus Dei*, is, by virtue of its topological position in the divine understanding, also eternal in exact proportion to the degree to which it has acquired clear and distinct particular ideas of the essences of things and of divine nature through an application of the second and third *genera* of cognition.¹³⁷ Thus, in SPINOZA'S ontology, infinite divine perfection pervades (or is manifested in) human finitude.

¹³⁴Citations are from the *Tractatus de intellectus emendatione*, ÁJELLES and RIEUWERTSZ, eds.), *passim*.

¹³⁵FOUCHER DE CAREIL suggests in a footnote that LEIBNIZ here mistakes book IV for book V of the *Ethica*. In this case, LEIBNIZ also mistakes proposition 28 for proposition 33 (28 does not discuss the concept of *amor Dei*). Alternatively, he rightly refers to Part 4, proposition 28 and in this case, he mistakes *Dei cognitio* for *amor Dei*.

¹³⁶*quae Spinosa de amore Dei intellectuali habet (Ethica p. 4., proposition 28), nonnisi ad populum phaleras esse cum in Deo omnia bona malaque indiscriminatim necessario producente nihil est amabile ...*" (FOUCHER DE CAREIL ed., p. 68. LEIBNIZ'S reflection on chapter IV, point XXII of WACHTER'S book; p. 63. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

¹³⁷Cf. *Ethica*, book two, proposition XL, scholium; ÁJELLES and RIEUWERTSZ, eds.), p. 78. Note that in the *Tractatus de intellectus emendatione*, SPINOZA still distinguishes between four kinds of cognition (*perceptio*), of which, in his judgment, only the fourth kind, *intuitio*, is able to provide us with clear and distinct ideas, and hence, be our cognitive instrument on our way toward an adequate idea of God.

In the end, FRIEDMANN's philosophical assessment of LEIBNIZ's confrontation with Spinozism in the *Animadversiones* ... seems well justified as he says that:

*In the «Annotations», Leibniz does not refute Spinoza. His rare attempts to point out, in the argumentation of his adversary, a contradiction or a mistake are rather sketchy and very superficial. In most cases, he contents himself with confronting, on account of a disputed issue, his own opinion to that of Spinoza or to what he, referring to Wachter, represents as that of Spinoza.*¹³⁸

Finally, in the context of our study, it is crucial to point out that in his Hannover notes on WACHTER, LEIBNIZ no longer makes the (seemingly) evident transition from the discussion of the *spiritus mundi/anima mundi* hypothesis to that of Spinozism. Instead of suggesting that there is a necessary, let alone essential, philosophical connection between these two, he seems to announce that they are not related. Rather, he uses the world soul theory as a stepping stone by which to advance to the analysis of SPINOZA's specific concept of the *soul*, only to reject it after a superficial treatment. As he closes the whole manuscript with the remark, "In all this, there is a lack of reason" ("In his omnibus rationis egestas"), one wonders if this concerns the last topic only (metempsychosis) or the entire metaphysical system of Spinozism, which he no longer sincerely desired to understand.

A vivid interest, however, for the philosophy of SPINOZA was to manifest itself, in the third part of the eighteenth century, in the thought of many leading German intellectuals and, in particular, in that of LESSING, whose statement about the world soul, made in the context of his famous discussion with JACOBI about Spinozism, will be the main connecting link throughout the remaining points of our present chapter. We are going to approach that statement, first, by examining the thought of an author, Frans HEMSTERHUIS, whose philosophical theology was one of the subjects of the memorable series of conversations between LESSING and JACOBI in the summer of 1780. HEMSTERHUIS's theology, as expounded in his philosophical dialogue, *Aristée* (1779), is an important topic in the context of our study since it also takes a (prohibitive) position on the question of the universal soul.

In order to see better the philosophical context of the mature LESSING's turn toward Spinozism, we will then offer a synoptic presentation of his philosophy of

¹³⁸ "Leibniz ne réfute pas Spinoza, dans les «Animadversiones». Ses rares tentatives pour découvrir chez son adversaire une contradiction ou une erreur sont à peine esquissées et très superficielles. La plupart du temps, il se contente, sur le point litigieux, de confronter à l'opinion de Spinoza (ou à ce qu'il présente comme tel à travers Wachter) la sienne propre." (FRIEDMANN, chapter VII: *Spinoza vu à travers J. G. Wachter et la Cabale*; p. 228. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) On the mediating role of WACHTER, FRIEDMANN gives the following elucidation: "L'Elucidarius de Wachter, dans son décor cabaliste et mystique, a constitué une heureuse incitation pour Leibniz à se retourner vers Spinoza qui était depuis longtemps sorti du cercle de ses préoccupations immédiates, directes et nous a valu ces «Animadversiones» qui marquent comme un accident dans une période où Leibniz se trouve déjà détaché (par son système bouclé) et comme au-delà d'un intérêt vivant pour le spinozisme." (*Ibid.*, p. 229.)

religion on the basis of a choice of key texts, many of them from his *Theologischer Nachlass*, posthumously published in 1784 by his brother. The analysis of these texts will reveal to us the intrinsic logic of LESSING'S thought in its evolution from Leibnizianism to Spinozism. All this is going to lead us to an interpretation of his position on the universal soul as it was seen through JACOBI'S eyes.

8 The Rejection of the World Soul in HEMSTERHUIS'S Theology (*Aristée ou de la divinité* 1779). Space as an Attribute of God. HEMSTERHUIS'S Philosophical Relationship to Spinozism. LESSING'S Understanding of HEMSTERHUIS'S Theology, as Reflected in His Conversations with JACOBI

*I gave Lessing three writings of the younger Hemsterhuis, of whom he had not read anything yet except the Letter on Sculpture. These were the Letter on Man and His Relations, Sophile, and Aristée. I only unwillingly ceded him the Aristée, which I had just received in Münster as I had travelled through that city and had not yet read; but it was impossible to refuse him, so much he insisted on getting it.*¹³⁹

It is with these words that JACOBI introduces, in his *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza* ('1785), the section about LESSING'S interest in the works of "the younger HEMSTERHUIS". Frans HEMSTERHUIS (1721–1790), called *the younger* with reference to his father, a renowned professor in Leiden University, is the most significant philosopher the Dutch province *Frislân* has given to the world to date. Born in Franeker, *Frentsjer* in modern West Frisian, this statesman and thinker earned great fame all over Western Europe, and in particular in Germany, primarily by his philosophical works, *Lettre sur l'homme et ses rapports* and *Aristée ou de la divinité*, which he composed not in his mother tongue but in French. With the *Lettre sur l'homme*, he could avail himself of DIDEROT'S altruistic correctorship, who, in the manuscript, *Observations sur Hemsterhuis*, incisively improved the French of the text, adding to it an appreciative philosophical assessment, despite the *prima facie* manifest, deep-seated difference between their respective metaphysical positions (cf. "*La lecture de votre ouvrage m'a fait grand plaisir. Il y a des idées très belles,*

¹³⁹“*Ich gab Lessing drey Schriften des jüngeren Hemsterhuis, von dem er, ausser dem Briefe über die Bildhauerey, nichts kannte: Lettre sur l'homme & ses rapports, Sophile, und Aristée. Den Aristée, den ich zu Münster bey meiner Durchreise erst erhalten und noch nicht gelesen hatte, ließ ich ihm ungerne; aber Lessings Verlangen war zu groß.*” (F. H. JACOBI: *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza in Briefen an den Herrn Moses Mendelssohn*, '1785, JACOBI'S first letter to MENDELSSOHN, 4 November 1783. GA, *Werke*, vol. 1/1, p. 36. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting by JACOBI.) JACOBI gave the above-mentioned works of HEMSTERHUIS to LESSING on an unspecified day in late July–early August 1780.

très neuves et très fines.)¹⁴⁰ On the other hand, HEMSTERHUIS had illustrious German translators also, in the persons of HERDER (*Lettre sur les désirs*, and in part, *Lettre sur l'homme*) and JACOBI (*Alexis* and *Lettre sur l'athéisme*), respectively, who rendered his name well-known in Germany.

HEMSTERHUIS had begun work on his main philosophical theological text, the *Aristée*, already in 1776 and published it, in his own private edition, in 1779.¹⁴¹ Despite the reduced number of the printed copies, the work, a fictitious dialogue¹⁴² essentially on the philosophical relationship between God and nature, spread quickly and gained acknowledgement. An easier-to-get edition of HEMSTERHUIS's collected works appeared posthumously, in 1792.

We may say that the *Aristée* departs from a problem raised by the physico-theological argument for the existence of God, as the eponymous antagonist objects to this argument that the *order* of nature is not apparent, and so no argument may be made from design. Dioclès, the protagonist, who represents HEMSTERHUIS's position, points out that man's limited natural capacities of perception and intellection determine the amount of order he is able to perceive in the visible universe, while an infinite intellect *must* be conscious of the perfect coordination of absolutely all existing essences. This part of the *Aristée* may be regarded as a philosophical introduction.

The main part of the dialogue that follows hereupon is a demonstration, by six different arguments, that the material universe is neither eternal (infinite in time) nor ontologically necessary, and that it, therefore, does not exist "*par essence*" (*a se*, by its own inherent power), but depends for its existence on an infinitely powerful and intelligent being, God. This demonstration, which would seem to lead to the conclusion that God is an *extramundane* creator in a Leibnizian manner, is,

¹⁴⁰D. DIDEROT: *Observations sur Hemsterhuis* (1773–1774), manuscript published in 1964 by G. MAY (see bibliography under this name). DIDEROT, already known in the entire European republic of letters, was asked, when sojourning in Den Haag, by HEMSTERHUIS personally to proofread the *Lettre sur l'homme* for grammar and style. DIDEROT overfulfilled the task, in that he added systematic (critical) philosophical remarks to HEMSTERHUIS's text. When we say that there is a *prima facie* manifest difference between HEMSTERHUIS's physico-theology, and the atheistic hylozoism of the mature DIDEROT, we are still aware that this difference might not be philosophically as deep as it looks. DIDEROT conceived of his own vitalistic physiological position as a kind of *Spinozism* (cf. the articles *Naturaliste* and *Spinoziste* of the *Encyclopédie*). HEMSTERHUIS, on the other hand, also had a concealed sympathy, revealed in his letters to princess GALLITSIN, for a more historically conceived Spinozism, even though his primary philosophical aim in the *Aristée* is precisely to delimit the divine substance from the material substance of the natural world. The distant philosophical analogy between DIDEROT's and HEMSTERHUIS's respective, idiosyncratically 'Spinozistic' thoughts, may partly account for HEMSTERHUIS's *prima fronte* odd choice of DIDEROT as a proofreader, since HEMSTERHUIS certainly knew about the *Encyclopédie* and the spirit in which it was edited. On HEMSTERHUIS's complex relationship toward Spinozism, see HAMMACHER 1995, and our discussion below.

¹⁴¹For a scientific chronology of HEMSTERHUIS's works, see *Bibliographie* in FRESKO et al., eds., pp. 643–647, which indicates the time of composition as well as the time of publication of the respective works.

¹⁴²In the *Avertissement de l'Éditeur*, written by HEMSTERHUIS himself, the author pretends that his work is a free translation from classical Greek, of a manuscript dialogue originally composed by an Athenian belonging to the Socratic school, in the classical epoch.

nevertheless, completed with the argument that physical space, by reason of its natural infinity, can not but be an attribute of God, a being infinite by its essence. Physical space is thus the *ratio omnipraesentiae* of the divine substance, but this does not entail, for HEMSTERHUIS, that material bodies are *modes* of God.

The resulting thesis of the existence of an *intramundane* God strongly raises the problem of evil (even if God is not asserted to be consubstantial with the natural universe). HEMSTERHUIS tries to resolve this query by defining evil as an “*obstacle to the will*”, blaming all evil on the inappropriate direction of the will, *velléité*. Finally, he suggests, by an analogical argument, that there is a kind of homogeneity between human and divine nature respectively, by virtue of the ‘moral organ’ of the soul, the “*organ of the soul by which alone the divine reality can be contemplated*” (“*ὄργανον τῆς ψυχῆς ᾧ μόνῳ θεατόν ἐστὶ τὸ θεῖον*”).¹⁴³ At the close of the dialogue, HEMSTERHUIS sums up the philosophical results with Aristée’s following words:

*We have found that, no doubt, a perfect order prevails in the universe but it can be manifest for the eyes of the Divinity only. We have seen, as we contemplated this grand All on every side perceptible for us, that it is a manifestly dependent entity, the product of an infinitely intelligent creative power. We have found that the absolute infinity of space is the true measure of the extension and presence of God. We have acquired a slight idea of our relations with Him and of the degree of our homogeneity with Him.*¹⁴⁴

In view of the world soul problematique, we have to examine the main, middle part of the discussion here. As we have just said, the ultimate aim of this part is to refute Aristée’s Spinozistic position that the world exists by itself and so it may be regarded as God, as well as to work out a dialectically articulate and logically consistent concept of a creator God. The interlocutors agree that a simplified version of the (Leibnizian) cosmological argument can eventually arrive at the conclusion that something *does* exist by itself (that something is an *ens necessarium*, as LEIBNIZ would put it),¹⁴⁵ once the simple proposition that ‘there is something’ is admitted. But anything existing by its own intrinsic power, any substance that is the self-contained source of existence for other, contingent substances, is necessarily infinite in time, as it neither receives its existence from any further ground, nor does it ‘receive’ it from itself: it simply *is* eternally existing in eternal immobility. Thus, the attributes of unchangeability and infinity are, philosophically, to be eliminated

¹⁴³ MEYBOOM ed., vol. II, p. 72 (allegedly a citation from the Greek ‘original’).

¹⁴⁴ “*Nous avons trouvé qu’il doit régner un ordre parfait dans l’Univers, qui ne sauroit être visible que pour l’œil de la Divinité. Nous avons vu, en contemplant ce grand Total de tous les côtés sensibles pour nous, que sa dépendance est manifeste; et qu’il n’est que le produit d’une Puissance créatrice, infiniment intelligente. Nous avons vu que l’infinité absolue de l’espace, est la mesure de l’étendue et de la présence du Dieu. Nous avons entrevu la nature de nos relations, et le degré de notre homogénéité avec lui.*” (*Ibid.*, p. 75. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI. Citations from HEMSTERHUIS in the original orthography throughout.)

¹⁴⁵ Note that Dioclès explicitly rejects that the attribute ‘necessary’ adds anything meaningful to the concept of ‘that which is’: “... *nous voyons clairement, que le mot nécessaire n’est qu’une épithète ajoutée à ce qui est; et qu’être, agir, produire, durer nécessairement, ne dit autre chose qu’être, agir, produire, ou durer.*” (*Ibid.*, pp. 25–26; roman characters by HEMSTERHUIS.) There is no reference by name to either LEIBNIZ or SPINOZA in the entire dialogue.

from the concept of the physical universe if we set out to prove the existence of a creator God along this line.

As we remarked above, HEMSTERHUIS realizes this philosophical programme by six arguments set to reveal the finitude of the world under so many aspects. After suggesting in the first argument that the material world, in respect of its physical extension, cannot be infinite¹⁴⁶ and, in the second, that the universe as a whole of organic substances is directed toward producing determinate, i.e., again, *finite* substances, HEMSTERHUIS, in the third argument, examines the concept of *commerce* among the finite, material parts of the world. It is into this argument against the “*existence par essence*” (*a-se-ity*) of the natural universe that the passage concerning “*l'ame du monde*” is embedded, as follows.

Commerce between corporeal substances analytically involves action and reaction, *influxus physicus*.¹⁴⁷ *Reaction* in the natural universe is resistance elicited by an action and exactly proportional to that action, which it therefore annihilates. Thus, theoretically, actions arising in the interactions of nature should invariably be quashed by the opposed reaction, whereby we could expect that the operations of nature come to an immediate standstill. But this is not what we find in experience, which reveals a constant agitation rather than a standstill in nature. Therefore, we are obliged to postulate that though matter is a completely inert substance, an independent supra-sensible principle is constantly producing the actions perceptible in nature, eliciting thereby the reactions of matter. Hence, matter in itself has to be conceived as passive, but irritable or reactive, while the uninterrupted large-scale operations of nature reveal a “*foreign power*” (“*puissance étrangère*”), a “*continuous impulse*” (“*impulsion continuelle*”):¹⁴⁸

Suppose that one part (of matter) is possessed of a principle of action. As soon as this principle starts to operate on some other part, the active part of matter will be confronted with an equally powerful but directly contrary principle, which will destroy its effect. Consequently, the universe would destroy its own activity at every single instant, which is

¹⁴⁶That space as an attribute of God is *infinite* (see above), while the material world, situated in infinite space, is *finite*, is no philosophical contradiction in itself, for HEMSTERHUIS's thought.

¹⁴⁷From a certain point of view, HEMSTERHUIS's argument displays some similarity with that of KANT in the *Nova Dilucidatio* (1755), proposition XIII, *usus* 3 and 5–6. KANT here grounds the principle of coexistence and mutual commerce between substances (“*nexus substantiarum*”) in the intellect of God. Conversely, the existence of God is proved by virtue of the conspicuous, universal cooperation of substances, which demands the existence of a common principle (*usus* 3). In *usus* 5, KANT constructs the concept of space from those of action and reaction between substances (“*spatii notio implicatis substantiarum actionibus absolvitur*”). In the case of the universal attraction of bodies (“*universalis gravitas*”), action and reaction are grounded in the same possibility of commerce between substances, the principle of which must be God (“*attractio Newtoniana ... nonnisi Deo immediato statore iugiter durat*”). Thus again, KANT deduces the existence of God conceptually from the possibility, and reality, of action and reaction between substances. The difference of the Kantian argument for the existence of God here versus the one HEMSTERHUIS deploys in the now examined passage of *Aristée* is that according to HEMSTERHUIS, God Himself moves matter supra-sensibly, whereas for KANT, God is in this context first and foremost the principle of the *possibility* of mutual commerce (“*eadem enim, quae substantias existentes reddit et conservat individua actio, mutuum ipsius universalemque dependentiam conciliat*”; all citations from AK vol. I, pp. 414–415).

¹⁴⁸Citations from *Aristée*'s and *Dioclès*'s respective statements, MEYBOOM ed., vol. II, p. 31.

*absurd. Hence, the universe, in so far as it is material, is in the condition of absolute rest. Nevertheless, we notice that there is motion in it. Therefore, there exists an active principle, more powerful and of a different, non-reactive nature.*¹⁴⁹

The weak point of the argument seems a dialectically false analysis of the concept of interaction between corporeal substances, and in particular, in respect of mutual (reciprocal) causality. When two metallic balls meet, the kinetic energy of the ball initiating the clash is never fully absorbed in the shock but is in large part transferred to the other ball. HEMSTERHUIS does not seem to consider the phenomenon that motion is propagated – the phenomenon on which Aristotelian natural science in general is based. He draws a conclusion which has a broader logical scope than allowed by the premisses. Theoretically, it seems unjustified to say that a fully material universe would destroy its own activity in every instant.

Yet, this is, in any case, a significant point of the argument, as it is on the basis of a very similar chain of ideas (though through a different conceptual network and scientific methodology) that both BAADER and SCHELLING will conclude, only years later, that there *must* exist a supra-sensible universal soul. This conclusion is, however, not that of HEMSTERHUIS, though he also begins to analyse the hypothesis of *l'ame du monde* at this very point.

Aristée proposes the world soul hypothesis in the following words: “*the universe is a living being and ... the God we are looking for is, properly speaking, but the soul of the world*” (“... *l'Univers est un animal, et ... le Dieu que nous cherchons n'est proprement que l'Ame du monde*”).¹⁵⁰ After, he offers an analogical definition of the universal soul, which is for him, “*that which would be the same to the universe and the world as my soul is to my body; that which would govern the parts of the universe in the same manner as I govern my body parts.*”¹⁵¹

Since this definition considers soul as the principle of life, it evidently and necessarily attributes also the *internal* motions of the body to the soul. Nevertheless, Dioclès, next, restricts the scope of the definition merely to the direction of the *external* voluntary movements of the body, suggesting that ‘gouverner’ does not cover any other semantic momentum beyond that. This is a fatal and philosophically illegitimate blow to the rationale for the positing of a universal soul, as it conceals a conceptual transition from *anima* to *mens*. In the classical psychological tradition, it is precisely *soul (anima)* that ‘governs’ or controls all vital biological functions of the body (whether these are susceptible to the influence of volition or

¹⁴⁹“*Supposez qu'une partie fût douée d'un principe d'action; aussitôt que ce principe se réalise sur quelque autre partie, elle trouve un principe de même valeur, directement contraire, qui le détruit: par conséquent l'Univers détruirait à tout instant sa propre activité; ce qui est absurde: par conséquent l'Univers, entant que matériel, est parfaitement inerte. Cependant nous y voyons du mouvement: par conséquent, il y a un principe actif, plus puissant, et d'une autre nature que celui de réaction.*” (Dioclès's discourse in the *Aristée*, *ibid.* Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

¹⁵⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁵¹“*Ce qui seroit à l'Univers, et au monde, ce que mon ame est à mon corps; ce qui gouverneroit les parties de l'Univers, comme moi je gouverne mes membres.*” (*Ibid.*, p. 32. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

not), while *mind* or apperceptive self-consciousness (*mens*) is the principle of, among other things, conscious purposive external action.

Essentially, then, Dioclès no longer talks about an *anima mundi* but about a *mens mundi* as he argues that, analytically, there is no room for the world to display exterior activity (since it is an all-inclusive totality), and that, therefore, there is no sufficient reason to posit the existence of a universal *soul*.¹⁵² This seems a simple *petitio principii* so far. This treacherous argument is, then, followed by the better-known (Leibnizian) refutation of the world soul hypothesis with a reference to the divergence that exists among the respective volitions (i.e., minds) of individual human agents. This second argument starts from the analogy that on the *anima mundi*-theory, individual human persons are to the world soul *like* the limbs of an individual body are to the individual person. If the analogy is valid, the world soul must be thought to act antagonistically to itself:

*Hence, if human beings are to this soul of the world that which our arms and legs are to us, it would be impossible to find a more perfect token of folly than this God or this soul of the world. Every day, we experience that living beings pursue and hate each other with all their vigour. Consequently, these beings do not obey one general will but each of them is isolated and free in its sphere of activity.*¹⁵³

It looks, however, that in this passage, a philosophical appeal is made especially to the conscious activities of human individuals, as an argument against the existence of a universal soul. But, again, conscious activities are a product of the mind and a reference to them is of questionable relevance when the theoretical possibility of a common universal principle of life (a world soul) is considered. It seems that as long as the concept of a world *soul* is discussed, it is not a priori necessary that the scope of control such a universal biological principle has should extend to the homogenization of the several individual volitions, i.e., to the production of one general will, “*une seule volonté générale*”. This argument is again made possible by the semantic restriction of the term “*ame du monde*”, and can refute only the numerical identity of all human minds, apperceptive and purposive self-consciousnesses.

Albeit HEMSTERHUIS, on questionable argumentative ground, here abandons the *anima mundi* hypothesis, he returns to it one more time in the frame of the sixth argument for the ontological dependence of the visible world. The sixth argument carries the character of a natural philosophical and physico-theological recapitulation in that it establishes a theology on the concept pair *inertia-activity*. The Newtonian law, argues HEMSTERHUIS, of the universal attraction of bodies would

¹⁵²“*L’ame du monde gouverneroit donc les parties de l’Univers, pour produire des effets au-dehors? Or il n’y a pas de dehors.*” (*ibid.*)

¹⁵³“*Si donc les hommes sont à cette Ame du monde, ce que nous sont nos bras et nos jambes, il seroit impossible de voir un symbole plus parfait de la folie que ce Dieu ou cette Ame du monde. Or nous voyons tous les jours des Etres animés se poursuivre, se haïr, se détester de toute leur activité. Par conséquent ces Etres n’obéissent pas à une seule volonté générale; mais chacun de ces Etres est isolé, et libre dans la sphere de son activité.*” (Dioclès’s discourse in the *Aristée*, *ibid.*, p. 33. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

entail an immobile coagulation of matter, unless a force applied *ab extra* can bring the material universe into the condition of a wound up spring, “*d'un ressort tendu*”.¹⁵⁴ But if the natural condition of matter is inertia and passivity, then it is utterly unlikely that it can move, i.e., be causally active per se, by virtue of its essence. It is not even the cause of its own (locomotive) modifications, but is obliged to succumb to the motive power of a higher external agent.

From this concept of an *active principle* external to matter, we may conclude, suggests HEMSTERHUIS, that the movement of matter is controlled or *directed* (since this movement is invariably perfectly *determined*). The concept of *direction*, in turn, leads us on to that of a (specifically determined) *volition*. As the determination of the will analytically implies deliberation, we may ultimately conclude that an *intellect* has contrived the design or perfect coordination of the material universe.

It is not difficult to discover in this train of ideas the logical frame of the physico-theological argument. But it does come as a novelty when HEMSTERHUIS, in spite of what he said above on account of the *ame du monde*, strikes a more permissive note in respect of this theory when he makes a philosophical transition from the concept of the *direction* to that of the *creation* of the world. In this last phase of his argumentation, he grafts, as it were, the cosmological argument on to the physico-theological argument:

*Finally, however long we may examine that which is called activity, primitive action, pure cause of motion, this principle may be named the soul of the world but it will never be able to do more than modify that which is there already. It may perhaps be a legislative faculty but not a creative power. That creative power is infinitely beyond our intellect but its existence is just as indisputable as that of the entire universe, since if it did not exist, the universe could not exist at all. This is the God who created the universe, who gave it an everlasting impulse in order that it should produce substances incessantly and eternally; this is the God who filled it up with free beings ...*¹⁵⁵

In this lenient formulation, HEMSTERHUIS first seems to allow for the possibility that in the hierarchical scheme of creative and directive principles, God, the sovereign creating power, is followed by the universal soul as a subordinate directive agent, which acts by delegation of power. This scheme is like the simplified Neoplatonic ontological pattern BAADER and SCHELLING instituted in their respective speculative-experimental natural philosophies. But immediately thereafter, HEMSTERHUIS rescinds this idea and puts forward an essentially Cartesian rationale for motion: God gave the natural universe an ‘eternal thrust’ so it may continuously produce substances and operate.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

¹⁵⁵ “*Enfin, de quelque côté qu'on examine ce qu'on appelle activité, action primitive, cause pure de mouvement, ce principe pourra s'appeler l'Ame du monde, mais ne sauroit s'élever qu'à la faculté de modifier ce qui est, à une faculté législative, si l'on veut, mais jamais à la puissance créatrice. Cette Puissance est un principe infiniment au-dessus de notre intellect, mais dont l'existence est tout aussi indubitable que celle de l'Univers entier; puisque, sans l'existence de cette Puissance, celle de l'Univers entier seroit absurde. Voilà le Dieu qui a créé l'Univers, qui lui a donné une impulsion éternelle pour former des substances sans cesse et sans fin, qui l'a peuplé d'Étres libres ...*” (Dioclès's discourse in the *Aristée*, *ibid.*, p. 51. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

Before we can generally assess HEMSTERHUIS's natural philosophy and theology, and situate his rejection of the world soul in its proper philosophical context, a potentially Spinozistic theory of his, about the attribution of space to God, still demands analysis as we are now approaching LESSING's statement on the universal soul. HEMSTERHUIS affirms, but does not prove, that space is infinite and indivisible (or without parts) and that it is different, in respect of substance, from what it holds or receives in itself. The philosophical query with this thesis is how an *extended* entity can be *without parts*? It seems an analytical judgment that *extensio* is a *series/repetitio partium* (LEIBNIZ's definition). Second, how does a partless entity receive that which is composed of parts? A thing without parts is, in principle, non-extended, like the mathematical point, which does not have any parts (EUCLIDES' first definition). Thus, theoretically, it may not hold anything that is extended.

HEMSTERHUIS expounds his problematic conception of space with Dioclès's words who asserts:

*The only real and perfectly absolute infinite in the natural world is space. It is one; it does not have any parts; it encompasses in itself every actual and possible thing but these are not parts of its essence. Consequently, it is impossible that it should not be. Hence, it follows from its existence that it endures eternally. Further, it is impossible that there should be two absolutely infinite things, distinct from one another, because this would involve that they are, in some way, limited and this contradicts their infinity. By our reasoning, then, we have acquired a mathematically firm and perfect conviction of the existence of one single Creator God who exists by virtue of His essence and His own power and who is, consequently, infinite. Therefore, space, being one and infinite, is not a distinct thing or essence; which leads us to the conclusion that it is an attribute of God. It is the only divine attribute whereby we know this grand Being, by dint of our sense organs. What other attributes, infinite in number, should we name, besides that of space, in order to qualify the Divinity fully? This is a question, Aristée, which only God Himself could answer. But the mathematically certain result of this grand attribute is the omnipresence of God. The entire, actual and possible universe could not even be a part, an atom or a mode of this infinite God. Nevertheless, He is everywhere; He is here; there is no part – not even the most indivisibly small one – in this bush, in you, in me, Aristée, which He does not penetrate. He is just as perfectly present in you as in the entire universe and as in Himself; and you doubt whether Aristée entertains relations with Him!*¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶“Le seul infini réel, et parfaitement absolu dans la nature, c'est l'Espace: il est un: il n'a point de parties: il comprend en lui tout l'actuel et tout le possible, sans que l'actuel ou le possible fassent partie de son essence. Par conséquent sa non-existence est absurde. Ainsi la durée éternelle est une suite de son existence. – Deux infinis absolus, distingués l'un de l'autre, sont impossibles, puisque cela supposerait des bornes quelconques contradictoires à l'infinité. – Par nos raisonnements, nous sommes parvenus à la conviction géométrique et parfaite de l'existence d'un seul Dieu Créateur, qui existe par son essence, par sa propre force, et qui, par conséquent, est infini. – Ainsi l'espace, un et infini, n'est pas un Etre ou une essence distincte; et par conséquent, il est un attribut de Dieu. – C'est le seul attribut, par lequel nous connoissons ce grand Etre, au moyen même de nos organes. Quelle infinité d'attributs il faudroit ajouter à l'espace, pour compléter le total de la Divinité; c'est-là une question, Aristée, à laquelle Dieu seul pourroit répondre. Mais ce qui résulte géométriquement de ce grand attribut, c'est la toute-présence de la divinité. Tout l'Univers, actuel ou possible ensemble, ne sauroit faire une partie, un atôme, ou un mode de ce Dieu infini. Pourtant il est partout: il est ici: il n'y a dans cet arbuste, dans vous, ni dans moi, Aristée, aucune partie, quelque indivisiblement petite que nous la concevions, qu'il ne pénètre. Il est en vous aussi parfaitement présent que dans tout l'Univers, que dans lui-même: et vous doutez si Aristée a des relations avec lui!” (Dioclès's discourse in the *Aristée*, *ibid.*, p. 65. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

The thesis that space is “*un attribut de Dieu*” recalls SPINOZA'S doctrine of *spatium* as an attribute of God. At the same time, however, HEMSTERHUIS does not consider either the actual universe or a part thereof to be a *modus* of the divine attribute of space, like SPINOZA does. Further, when HEMSTERHUIS affirms that space, as an attribute of God, is not a real being or essence, he again occupies a different position from that of SPINOZA, for whom each attribute expresses the essence of the infinite substance from a different perspective. Thus, although substance, in reality, has only one essence, it is legitimate to talk about as many essences as there are attributes, in Spinozism.¹⁵⁷

On this point, therefore, HEMSTERHUIS comes nearer to LEIBNIZ'S conception of space. As is known, LEIBNIZ extensively elaborated on his concept of space (and time) in his correspondence with S. CLARKE. In this debate (cf. Section 9 of Chapter 6), as well as on other occasions, LEIBNIZ held the view that ‘absolute space is something imaginary, and that there is nothing real in it’;¹⁵⁸ in sum, that it is an *order* of things or situations, not a thing in itself, but an *ens ideale* or *mentale*.¹⁵⁹ But, while HEMSTERHUIS would agree with LEIBNIZ that space is not an essence or substance on its own, HEMSTERHUIS'S explanation of space as an attribute of God resembles the position of CLARKE (representative of NEWTON) most of all. CLARKE, just like HEMSTERHUIS, also contended that “*Space is not a Substance*” and that it is, by dialectical necessity, a property of the absolutely necessary being: space is

¹⁵⁷ Cf. DELEUZE, p. 34.

¹⁵⁸ “... *spatium absolutum aliquid imaginarium est, et nihil ei reale inest, quam distantia corporum; verbo, sunt ordines (scil. tempus et spatium), non res.*” (LEIBNIZ'S letter to DES BOSSES of 29 May 1716; GERHARDT ed., 1965, vol. II, p. 517.)

¹⁵⁹ Cf., e.g., the following points of LEIBNIZ'S fifth, last letter to Dr. CLARKE: “33. *Puisque l'Espace en soy est une chose idéale comme le Temps, il faut bien que l'Espace hors du Monde soit imaginaire, comme les Scholastiques mêmes l'ont bien reconnu.*” (In CLARKE, p. 182.) “104. *Je ne dis point que l'Espace est un Ordre ou Situation qui rend les choses situables; ce seroit parler galimatias. On n'a qu'à considerer mes propres paroles, & à les joindre à ce que je viens de dire cy dessus, ... pour montrer comment l'Esprit vient à se former l'idée de l'Espace, sans qu'il faille qu'il y ait un être (!) réel & absolu qui y reponde hors de l'Esprit & hors des rapports. Je ne dis donc point, que l'Espace est un Ordre ou Situation, mais un Ordre des Situations, ou selon lequel les Situations sont rangées; & que l'Espace abstrait est cet Ordre des Situations conçues comme possibles. Ainsi c'est quelque chose d'idéal.*” (In CLARKE, p. 256.) In the *Animadversiones ad J. G. Wachteri librum* (see Section 7), however, LEIBNIZ seems to accept that spiritual, i.e., non-divisible ‘place’ may be brought in logical connection with God: “*Ego putem omnia esse in Deo non ut partem in toto, nec ut accidens in subjecto, sed ut locum in locato* (FOUCHER DE CAREIL: “*comme le lieu dans ce qu'il remplit*”), *sed locum spiritualem seu sustentantem, non ut locum commensuratum seu dividisum, nempe ita ut Deus est immensus seu ubique; adestque orbi[s] (?): itaque omnia in ipso; est enim ubi sunt res et ubi non sunt, et manet cum discedunt et jam fuit ubi accedunt.*” (FOUCHER DE CAREIL ed., pp. 38–39; LEIBNIZ'S reflection on chapter IV, point x of WACHTER'S book, p. 48. WACHTER here discusses the famed statement of SPINOZA'S epistle OP № 21: “*Omnia in Deo esse et in Deo moveri cum Paulo affirmo ...*”) Thus God appears as the *condition* of ‘place’, but place is *not* seen as the *ratio divinae omnipraesentiae*.

the *ratio omnipraesentiae Dei*.¹⁶⁰ HEMSTERHUIS, thus, occupies something like a mediating position between, chiefly, SPINOZA and NEWTON, as far as the concept of space as an attribute of God is concerned.¹⁶¹

HEMSTERHUIS's theory that space is an (essential) attribute of God displays notable differences from historical Spinozism in a metaphysical respect. While SPINOZA ultimately identifies *Deus* with *natura* in terms of substance, HEMSTERHUIS rejects the substantial identity of those terms, but nevertheless puts the world virtually into God. The metaphysical delimitation (real difference) of the world, from God, is thus removed to a higher region in the scale of possible ontological differences than in Leibnizian fundamental theology, constructed upon the cosmological argument. So HEMSTERHUIS institutes a less perceptible ontological difference between God and nature than LEIBNIZ does, but a more important one than SPINOZA does. The philosophical objective of his thesis is, argumentatively, to reinforce ('upgrade') the omnipresence of God, by reinterpreting it as a *physical* (i.e., more *real*) omnipresence through attributing space to God. HEMSTERHUIS hereby establishes the *intramundaneity* of God – a philosophical move we perceive also with some of the early German Romantics.

But the dialectical articulation, and hence, the persuasive power, of the argument leaves something to be desired. The general principle that whatever is infinite, has a title to existence by essence, *a-se-ity*, requires proof. This principle does not necessarily hold if you extend its validity to spatial infinity. Yet HEMSTERHUIS applies it to space. Further, though the concept of space does analytically include the possibility of an endless progression, there is still a long way to go before we can attribute positive infinity to it.¹⁶² Human experience entitles us only to believe that it is *indefinitely* extended. Next, HEMSTERHUIS, essentially, simply passes from spatial infinity to temporal infinity as he attributes eternity to physical space. Lastly,

¹⁶⁰Cf. CLARKE's thesis in his fourth reply: "Space is not a Substance, but a Property; And if it be a Property of That which is necessary, it will consequently (as all other Properties of That which is necessary must do,) exist more necessarily, (though it be not itself a Substance,) than those Substances themselves which are not necessary. Space is immense, and immutable, and eternal; and so also is Duration. Yet it does not at all from hence follow, that any thing is eternal hors de Dieu. For Space and Duration are not hors de Dieu, but are caused by, and are immediate and necessary Consequences of His Existence. And without them, his Eternity and Ubiquity (or Omnipresence) would be taken away." (CLARKE, p. 129; for a summary of NEWTON's concept of space as expounded by CLARKE, see KAULBACH, pp. 11–13.)

¹⁶¹HAMMACHER cites NEWTON's conception of space as the *sensorium Dei* (cf. Section 9 of Chapter 6), as the (only) likely source of HEMSTERHUIS's idea. It has to be pointed out, however, that the mathematicians J. RAPHSO (De spatio reali seu ente infinito ..., 1702) and L. EULER (*Réflexions sur l'espace et le temps*, 1748), as well as ÖTINGER (*Öffentliches Denckmahl der Lehr-tafel einer ... Prinzessin Antonia*, 1763, cf. Section 9 of Chapter 6), had also published similar theories, which attributed space philosophically to God. Theorizing about space as an attribute of God seems to have been widespread in early modern philosophy, just like a (cursory) philosophical treatment of the *anima mundi* theory. See bibliography for detailed reference on RAPHSO's and EULER's work.

¹⁶²A classical argument that we have no positive (clear and distinct) idea of the infinity of space, is to be found in LOCKE's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, book II, chapter xvii, points 4, 8, 13, 14.

the thesis that the simultaneous existence of two infinities implies a logical contradiction is void of all dialectical force in this form (though SPINOZA also relies on it in a more developed form).

All in all, HEMSTERHUIS'S theory that space is an (essential) attribute of God does give argumentative ground for the interpretative proposition that it is a (metaphysically weakened) Spinozism. All the more so, if we consider his *ad hoc* statement that an infinity of other attributes may have to be joined to the concept of the divinity, a hypothesis that recalls SPINOZA'S *Ethica*, part I, proposition XI. But, although HEMSTERHUIS'S clear philosophical intention, in the *Aristée*, is to move away from an ontologically strong identification of God with nature, there is good manuscript evidence that we are not mistaken when we claim to discover Spinozistic tendencies in the *Aristée* itself, and that, therefore, LESSING was also, to some extent, right when he asserted the same to JACOBI.

KI. HAMMACHER published substantial parts of HEMSTERHUIS'S relevant letter (of 10 March 1786) to the princess GALLITSIN, HEMSTERHUIS'S friend, from the original kept in the library of Münster University. We shall only cite the most necessary evidence from the text of the letter, which is now partially available, in favour of the thesis that though for 'political' reasons HEMSTERHUIS was reluctant to take a public position on SPINOZA, in his private correspondence he voiced an explicit and argued philosophical sympathy for Spinozism:

Why have I called Spinozism a kind of theism? First, because I have known Spinozists of the old stamp who would not put up with being labelled as atheists. In our language, a number of books have been written with infinite art which derive Spinozism from the Gospel. Second, when someone says that the only existing thing is the grand All and that all of its modes derive necessarily from its eternal nature, it does not make any difference if he calls this All a block or a God. On the other hand, I hold that there is no thinking being in the world who is an atheist in the proper sense of the word, i.e., who does not acknowledge a power infinitely superior to his own. In this respect, I refer to Epicure and Lucrece.¹⁶³

It has now become possible philosophically to situate HEMSTERHUIS'S rejection of the world soul theory in the broader context of his metaphysics, with an eye to our following, important theme, which is LESSING'S intellectual sympathy toward Spinozism and the *anima mundi*-theory. It appears convenient here to start out from

¹⁶³“*Pour que (scil. pourquoi) j'ai appelé le Spinosisme une espece de theïsme; 1^{mo} j'ai connu encore des Spinozistes de la vieille roche, qui se seroient scandalisés du nom athées. Nous avons des livres dans notre langue écrits avec un art infini, ou (!) le Spinosisme est deduit de l'Evangile. Mais 2^{do} Lorsqu'un homme dit qu'il n'y a rien qu'un Tout, dont toutes les modifications defluent necessairement de sa nature eternelle, il est fort indifferant s'il appelle ce Tout un bloc ou un Dieu. D'ailleurs je soutien qu'il n'y a pas un etre pensant dans le monde qui soit proprement Athée, c'est à dire, qui ne reconnoisse une puissance infiniment superieure à la sienne. J'en appelle à Epicure et à Lucrece.*” ('Socrates', i.e., HEMSTERHUIS to 'Diotima', i.e., princess GALLITSIN, in his letter of 10 March 1789. Citation from HAMMACHER 1995, pp. 496–497; manuscript in Universitätsbibliothek Münster, *Gallitzin-Nachlass*, vol. 11, № 20. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

how LESSING philosophically interpreted HEMSTERHUIS's *Aristée*. As is known from JACOBI's account, LESSING, perfectly charmed (“*ganz bezaubert*”) as he was by the *Aristée*, was not minded to notice the several more or less significant metaphysical differences by which HEMSTERHUIS wished to mark his position off from Spinozism. As JACOBI puts it:

*This is manifest Spinozism, said Lessing, and in such a beautiful unambiguous cover that even this cover itself contributes to the exposition and explanation of the internal doctrine.*¹⁶⁴

On the basis of the above-cited manuscript evidence from HEMSTERHUIS, it seems safe to suggest that, in the end, LESSING probably had a better intuition into the philosophical essence of the *Aristée* than JACOBI, who remained convinced, even several years later, that “*Hemsterhuis is certainly no Spinozist but entirely opposed to this doctrine in its most important points*”.¹⁶⁵ Further, it may be that LESSING found the *Aristée* philosophically sympathetic also because at least it treated, if negatively, the *anima mundi* hypothesis.

The world soul hypothesis, then, as we can see also in the example of HEMSTERHUIS's *Aristée*, is philosophically, let alone essentially, not related to the metaphysical system of historical Spinozism. It is systematically possible for one to have Spinozistic tendencies and refuse the *anima mundi*-theory. The world soul theory in any case articulates, with the instruments of the *imagination* (i.e., gives plasticity to), the conviction that the world is really a living organic whole, in which the individual has a pre-determined position. This conviction philosophically counter-balances the tendency of the individual who, precisely in the Romantic epoch, begins to establish systematic thought methodologically on the principle of the Self. Further, the universal soul is also conceived as a quasi-divine being, through the positing of which it becomes philosophically possible to secure the participation of what is finite in a tangible kind of divine infinity. Since HEMSTERHUIS achieves both these philosophical objectives through different means by attributing space immediately to the divine substance, he drops the *anima mundi*-theory. Space, to believe him, is a unified and even indivisible divine attribute. Thus, the full physical (topological) participation directly in God, of the finite thinking being, is philosophically safeguarded by him on a metaphysically less complex but also argumentatively less successful ground. In comparison with the *anima mundi*-theory, the philosophical advantage of HEMSTERHUIS's theology is that it opens up the perspective that individual rational beings are *immediately* situated in God Himself, by virtue of a spiritualized concept of space.

¹⁶⁴ “*Es wäre der offenbare Spinozismus, sagte Lessing, und in einer so schönen exoterischen Hülle, daß selbst diese Hülle zur Entwicklung und Erläuterung der innerlichen Lehre wieder beytrüge.* etc.” (GA, *Werke*, vol. 1/1, p. 36. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

¹⁶⁵ “*Hemsterhuis gewiß kein Spinozist, sondern dieser Lehre, in ihren wesentlichen Punkten, ganz zuwider {ist}.*” (*Ibid.*, p. 37. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

HEMSTERHUIS'S theology, poised between Leibnizian and Spinozistic positions, will now usher us in to the presentation and analysis of LESSING'S much-discussed statements concerning Spinozism and the world soul theory, the topic of our following points.

9 The Character of LESSING'S Philosophical Convictions: Mme DE STAËL on LESSING. A Synoptic Presentation of His Natural Theology and Turn Toward Spinozism: *Das Christenthum der Vernunft* (1753, posth. publ. 1784), *Ueber die Wirklichkeit der Dinge außer Gott* (approx. 1763; posth. publ. 1795), *Die Religion Christi* (1780) etc.

AS GOTTSCHED and KLOPSTOCK had been less many-sided, it would be difficult to find a more important author in the pre-GOETHE period of German literature than Gotthold Ephraim LESSING (1729-February 1781). But it is even more difficult to trace the spiritual or doctrinal character of this *polygraphe*, who may by right be seen as the founding father of modern German literature, with only HERDER competing with him for this title. Poet and dramatist, critic and polemist, and even a philosopher, LESSING was prolific in all genres of literary authorship, yet, as a metaphysician, he displayed a certain volatility which seems to have been in coordination with his latitudinarian moral theological convictions. An unending quest for truth was the essence of his constitution as a thinker, to believe the knowing M^{me} DE STAËL who, in her perhaps most influential book, *De l'Allemagne* (1813), characterized the thought of this protean personality with the following words:

*Lessing's inexhaustible capacities as a polemist threw suspicion on the most important questions and gave rise to new research in all genres. Lessing can not be considered either a materialist or an idealist; the need to examine and to study, in order to learn, was the motive power of his personality. "If the Omnipotent Being had the truth in the one hand and the search after truth in the other, I would opt for the search", he used to say.*¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶“*La toute-puissance polémique de Lessing réveillait le doute sur les questions les plus importantes, et portait à faire de nouvelles recherches en tout genre. Lessing lui-même ne peut être considéré ni comme matérialiste, ni comme idéaliste; mais le besoin d'examiner et d'étudier pour connoître était le mobile de son existence. »Si le Tout-Puissant, disoit-il, tenoit dans une main la vérité, et dans l'autre la recherche de la vérité, c'est la recherche que je de lui demanderois par préférence.»* (Troisième Partie: La philosophie et la morale, ch. VII: Des philosophes les plus célèbres de l'Allemagne avant et après Kant, STAËL HOLSTEIN, tome III, p. 99. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) See also *Seconde Partie*, ch. VI: *Lessing et Winckelmann*. M^{me} DE STAËL'S philosophical characterization of LESSING is corroborated by how MENDELSSOHN saw him: “*Geist der Untersuchung war bey ihm alles. Mit seichten Gründen behauptete Wahrheit, pflegte er zu sagen, ist Vorurtheil; nicht minder schädlich, als offenbarer Irrthum, und zuweilen noch schädlicher; denn ein solches Vorurtheil führt zur Trägheit im Nachforschen, und tödtet den Untersuchungsgeist.*” (*Morgenstunden oder Vorlesungen über das Dasein Gottes*, chapter XV: *Lessing – Dessen Verdienst um die Religion der Vernunft – Seine Gedanken vom geläuterten Pantheismus*; JA, vol. III/2, p. 132.) Again, HERDER'S Philolaus affirms very much the same in *Gott. Einige Gespräche*, at the end of the *Drittes Gespräch*: “*Er (LESSING) war nicht geschaffen, ein ... ist zu seyn, welche Buchstaben man auch hier dieser Endung voransetzen möge.*” (SUPHAN ed., Bd. XVI, p. 494.)

In the present point, we propose to reconstruct how LESSING may have developed a philosophical attraction toward the idea of God as the world soul and toward Spinozism. We shall then examine how this tendency of LESSING's is accounted for, or interpreted, in JACOBI's, MENDELSSOHN's and HERDER's related writings (respectively, *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza, in Briefen an Herrn Moses Mendelssohn*, 1785; *Morgenstunden oder Vorlesungen über das Dasein Gottes*, 1785; and *Gott. Einige Gespräche*, 1787), produced in the course or in the wake of what is universally known as the *Pantheismusstreit* or *Spinozastreit*.

For the reconstruction of the relevant aspect of LESSING's theological thought, we have picked out the following pieces as most representative and, for our topic, most suggestive (arranged in chronological order by date of probable composition): the early *Thoughts on the Herrnhutians* (*Gedanken über die Herrnhuter*, of 1750, posth. publ. 1784),¹⁶⁷ *The Christianity of Reason* (*Das Christenthum der Vernunft*, 1753, posth. publ. 1784), the two-page-long *On the Reality of Things Outside God* (*Ueber die Wirklichkeit der Dinge außer Gott*, approx. 1763, posth. publ. 1795), § 73 of *The Education of the Human Race* (*Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts*, prob. 1777, publ., up to § 53, in 1777, full anonym. publ. 1780), the freemasonic dialogues, i.e., the *Ernst und Falk: Dialogues for Freemasons* (the so-called 'Freimäurergespräche'; real title, *Ernst und Falk. Gespräche für Freimäurer*, 1778), and, last but not least, the pithy *The Religion of Christ* (*Die Religion Christi*, 1780, posth. publ. 1784). As it will have been seen from the publication dates of four out of these six works, we shall preponderatingly rely on texts which LESSING himself did not want to publish, and which were posthumously edited by his younger brother Karl Gotthelf LESSING, partly in 1784, in the collection *G. E. Lessing's Theological Legacy* (*G. E. Lessings Theologischer Nachlass*), partly in 1793–1795, in the biography *The Life of G. E. Lessing* (*G. E. Lessings Leben*).¹⁶⁸ We shall occasionally cite an early manuscript version of Hermann Samuel REIMARUS's (1694–1768) *Apologia or Defense for the Rational Reverers of God* (*Apologie oder Schutzschrift für die vernünftigen Verehrer Gottes*) as well. As is known, a chapter of an early elaboration of this work was published in 1778 by LESSING under the title, *On the Aim of Jesus Christ and His Disciples. Another Fragment of the Anonymous Author from Wolfenbüttel* (*Von dem Zwecke Jesu und sein Jünger. Noch ein Fragment des Wolfenbüttelschen Ungenannten*).¹⁶⁹ Insofar as REIMARUS's interpretation of Scripture here is in a manifest philosophical concord with LESSING's own doctrine, it is philologically justified to use it as a source illuminating LESSING's thought.

¹⁶⁷ As GÖPFERT puts it, this is "... die Fragment gebliebene früheste theologische Arbeit Lessings." (GÖPFERT ed., vol. 3, p. 794.)

¹⁶⁸ See *G. E. Lessings Theologischer Nachlass* in the bibliography under LESSING *frater*, 1784; and, respectively, *G. E. Lessings Leben, nebst seinem noch übrigen litterarischen Nachlasse I–III* under LESSING *frater*, 1793–1795. *Ueber die Wirklichkeit der Dinge außer Gott* is included in part II (1795), section IV ("Spinozisterei"), of the very voluminous LESSING-biography (altogether some 1,400 pages) written by LESSING *frater*.

¹⁶⁹ GÖPFERT specifies that LESSING depended on a (since then lost) copy of REIMARUS's manuscript that dated approximately of 1750 (cf. GÖPFERT ed., vol. 7, p. 866). Since REIMARUS worked away on his *opus magnum* till his death in 1768 (cf. ALEXANDER ed., vol. I, p. 10), LESSING's copy was

It seems reasonable to suggest that judging by these texts, LESSING's thought is articulated in the two interrelated facets of a practical philosophy and a philosophical theology or philosophy of God. LESSING's practical philosophy is a concentration on moral action, "*the fulfilment of the duties of a Christian*" ("*die Ausübung der Pflichten eines Christen*"),¹⁷⁰ which overshadows systematic theological doctrine. On the one hand, this execution of the Christian religious duties consists in displaying faith in, and love toward, God: '*Gott glauben und lieben*,'¹⁷¹ but, on the other hand, the duties of religion are also realized through performing philanthropic acts "*whose objective is to render superfluous all the acts which are customarily called good deeds*".¹⁷² Thus, virtue (*Tugend*) and action (*Handeln*) take precedence over philosophy (*Philosophie*) and obstinate arguing (*Vernünfteln*),¹⁷³ while the purity of the heart is more important than the choice of a positive religion by reason of a specific dogma system, as the purity of the heart *is* the essence of religion, affirms LESSING.

Further, existing Christian religion (*die christliche Religion*) is, for LESSING, different from how it was first conceived by its founder (*die Religion Christi*),¹⁷⁴ as Christ's doctrine admitted of one article of faith only: reliance upon Him, "*bloß ein Vertrauen zu ihm*."¹⁷⁵ But in the domain of Christology, LESSING went further

by far not the finalized version of the manuscript. The full *ultima manus* copy, published by ALEXANDER (see bibliography) two centuries after REIMARUS's death, is *substantially* different in structure and wording (though not in philosophical content and tendency) from the elaboration LESSING used, to the extent that the textual localization, of the portions LESSING published, in the finalized version of REIMARUS's text is no longer really possible.

¹⁷⁰*Gedanken über die Herrnhuter*, LESSING *frater* ed., 1784, text № 17, p. 264.

¹⁷¹Cf. *ibid.*, p. 265: "*Er* (a new teacher of religion) *lehrt* (pres. cond.) *uns*, *Gott nicht nur glauben, sondern was das vornehmste ist, lieben*."

¹⁷²Acts which "... *zielen dahin, um grössten Teils alles, was man gemeinlich gute Taten zu nennen pflegt, entbehrlich zu machen*." (Ernst und Falk. *Gespräche für Freimäurer*, at the very end of the *Erstes Gespräch*, in GÖPFERT ed., vol. 8, p. 457. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) H. S. REIMARUS proposes a similarly conceived summary of the doctrine of the Gospel: "... *lauter sittliche Pflichten, wahre Liebe Gottes und des Nächsten ...*" (In the fragment published by LESSING in 1778 under the title *Von dem Zwecke Jesu und seiner Jünger: Noch ein Fragment des Wolfenbüttelschen Ungenannten*, part I: *Von dem Zwecke der Lehre Jesu*, § 7; GÖPFERT ed., vol. 7, p. 502.)

¹⁷³Cf. *Gedanken über die Herrnhuter*, LESSING *frater* ed., 1784, pp. 263–264; and also the following general statement *ibid.*: "*Der Mensch ward zum Thun und nicht zum Vernünfteln erschaffen*." (P. 258; original orthography preserved throughout our citations from LESSING's texts.)

¹⁷⁴The thesis that the "*Religion Christi*" is different from the "*christliche Religion*" had already appeared in the early Enlightenment. As W. SCHRÖDER points out, "*Die Trennung der 'Religion Jesu' von der christlichen Religion wurde später ... ein Gemeinplatz der Aufklärung. Aber auch die frühen Radikalaufklärer setzten dieses Argument ein: Jesus war nicht der Stifter der 'christlichen Religion.'* In dem *atheistischen Symbolum sapientiae* (written around 1670–1680) *zielt der Gedanke, daß das Christentum gegenüber der Lehre seines vorgeblichen Stifters eine »nova religio« ist, gleichfalls primär gegen das Selbstverständnis der christlichen Theologie als Sachverhalterin der Lehre Jesu ...*" (SCHRÖDER 1998, p. 104.)

¹⁷⁵(REIMARUS): *Von dem Zwecke Jesu und seiner Jünger ...*, part I: *Von dem Zwecke der Lehre Jesu*, § 8; GÖPFERT ed., vol. 7, p. 503.

than this classical latitudinarian religious philosophical position as he, already in a mature age, questioned the divinity of Christ at least in one late text, *Die Religion Christi*.¹⁷⁶

Hence, it may be said that LESSING's practical philosophy is, essentially, a variety of the tradition of rationalized Christian latitudinarian ethics, while, as a novelty, a Spinozistic tendency gradually unfolds in his philosophy of God as he makes a continued effort consistently to think the respective concepts of *creation* and *divine intellect*, partly in a trinitological frame.¹⁷⁷ In historical terms, LESSING's turn towards SPINOZA's speculative theology seems to have spun off from a systematic reflection on the Leibnizian doctrine concerning the divine choice of the best possible world, as it had been proposed in the first part (*thesis* in §§ 7–10) of the *Essais de Théodicée* (1710). LEIBNIZ's proposition here is essentially that the will of God, determined by the idea of the best one among all possible worlds, but yet acting by free choice, creates a world which is, paradoxically, the best precisely because it admits of natural and moral evil. In the act of deliberation, the divine understanding functions as a spiritual 'instrument' with which God compares the respective *essences* of all possible worlds. The divine will attributes *existence* to the best one only, though even the rest, as it were, pretend to existence with an impetus proportional to their respective degrees of perfection.¹⁷⁸

LESSING departs from a fundamental theological consideration concerning the rational thinkability of the concept of 'creation by divine deliberation' when he, in the 1753 *Das Christenthum der Vernunft*, affirms, in tacit contradiction to LEIBNIZ, that a rationally consistent idea of creation does not include the momentum of divine consideration, since the absolute perfection of God postulates that the infinite divine intellect intuitively (i.e., without discursive consideration) knows which the best world is. Hence, asserts LESSING, the conception of an idea, giving consent to it, and creating the entity corresponding to it, must be a single act in and of the divine intellect. Ultimately, whatever God's mind conceives of immediately exists:

¹⁷⁶Cf. § 1 of *Die Religion Christi*: "Ob Christus mehr als Mensch gewesen, das ist ein Problem. Daß er wahrer Mensch gewesen, wenn er es überhaupt gewesen; daß er nie aufgehört hat, Mensch zu sein: das ist ausgemacht." (LESSING *frater* ed., 1784, p. 103.)

¹⁷⁷As HAMMACHER puts it: "Er (*scil.* LESSING) denkt vielmehr den Begriff vom göttlichen denkend schaffenden Verstand konsequent weiter, und zwar so, dass darin kein Vorzug mehr zwischen Denkmöglichem und der Wirklichkeit der Gedanken gefunden werden kann. Dadurch nähert er sich tatsächlich Spinozas Gottesbegriff, ohne dass er es jedoch weiss." (HAMMACHER, 1982, p. 91.)

¹⁷⁸As W. SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN puts it, "Das Mögliche existiert zunächst im Geist Gottes und drängt nach Existenz ... Die Stärke dieses Strebens steht im direkten Verhältnis zum Grad der Vollkommenheit des jeweils Möglichen ... Gott wählt aus der endlosen Anzahl der *possibilia* diejenigen aus, die miteinander am besten kompossibel sind, die also die beste mögliche Welt konstituieren, und verwirklicht sie ..." (SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN, 2001, p. 1070.)

*“To represent, to will, and to create are one and the same for God. One can therefore say that everything which God represents to himself, he also creates.”*¹⁷⁹

It follows from the perfection of God, argues LESSING, that He only conceives of what is supremely perfect (*“das Vollkommenste”*), which, further, can only be His own essence. But the divine essence can be conceived of either as a whole (and the appearance of such a conception in God is the begetting of the *Son*), or as an infinite gradation of the divine perfections, in the form of an organic multitude (and the ‘materialization’ of this conception in God is the creation of the *world*):

§ 4. *God can think of himself in only two ways: either he thinks of all of his perfections at once, and himself as the embodiment of them all; or he thinks of his perfections discretely, one separated from the other, and each divided by different degrees within himself.*

§ 5. *God thought of himself from eternity in all his perfections; that is, God created from eternity a being which lacked no perfection that he himself possessed.*

§ 6. *This being is called by Scripture the Son of God; or what would be better still, the Son God. A God, because it lacks none of the qualities pertaining to God. A Son, because that which represents something to itself seems, to our way of thinking, to have a certain priority to the representation.*

...

§ 13. *God thought of his perfections discretely, that is, he created beings each of which has something of his perfections; for – to repeat it once more – every thought is for God a creation.*

14. *All these beings together are called the world.*

15. *God could think of his perfections divided in an infinite number of ways; thus an infinite number of worlds would be possible if God did not always think of the most perfect one, and if he had not consequently thought of the most perfect among all these possible varieties and thereby made it real.*¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹“*Vorstellen, wollen und schaffen, ist bey Gott eines. Man kann also sagen, alles was sich Gott vorstellt, alles das schafft er auch.*” (*Das Christenthum der Vernunft*, § 3; LESSING *frater* ed., 1784, text № 12, p. 221. Transl. by H. B. NISBET ed., p. 25.) LESSING repeats his thesis concerning the immediate reality of God’s creative conceptions or ideas under § 13 of the same text, as follows: “... *denn, um es nochmals zu wiederholen, jeder Gedanke ist bey Gott eine Schöpfung.*” (*Ibid.*, p. 223; see below.)

¹⁸⁰“§ 4. *Gott kann sich nur auf zweyerley Art denken; entweder er denkt alle seine Vollkommenheiten auf einmal, und sich als den Inbegriff derselben; oder er denkt seine Vollkommenheiten zertheilt, eine von der andern abgesondert, und jede von sich selbst nach Graden abgetheilt.* § 5. *Gott dachte sich von Ewigkeit her in aller seiner Vollkommenheit; das ist, Gott schuf sich von Ewigkeit her ein Wesen, welchem keine Vollkommenheit mangelte, die er selbst besaß.* § 6. *Diese Wesen nennt die Schrift den Sohn Gottes, oder welches noch besser seyn würde, den Sohn Gott. Einen Gott, weil ihm keine von den Eigenschaften fehlt, die Gott zukommen. Einen Sohn, weil unserm Begriffe nach dasjenige, was sich etwas vorstellt, vor der Vorstellung, eine gewisse Priorität zu haben scheint. ...* § 13. *Gott dachte seine Vollkommenheiten zertheilt, das ist, er schafte Wesen, wovon jedes etwas von seinen Vollkommenheiten hat; denn, um es nochmals zu wiederholen, jeder Gedanke ist bey Gott eine Schöpfung.* § 14. *Alle diese Wesen zusammen, heissen die Welt.* § 15. *Gott könnte seine Vollkommenheiten auf unendliche Arten zertheilt denken; es könnten also unendlich viel Welten möglich seyn, wenn Gott nicht allezeit das vollkommenste dächte, und also auch unter diesen Arten die vollkommenste Art gedacht, und dadurch wirklich gemacht hätte.*” (*Ibid.*, pp. 221–223. Transl. by H. B. NISBET ed., pp. 25–27.)

This scheme, in a first instance, combines trinitology¹⁸¹ and creationism with a (perhaps Cabbalistically tinged) idea of the self-representation of God in the Son of God.¹⁸² LESSING is not concerned here to establish a real ontological difference between the substance resulting from *begetting* and that resulting from *creation*. In more general theological terms, he does not consider God in the perspective of the Leibnizian cosmological argument as the extramundane sufficient cause of the contingent beings. He takes an inverse logical movement as he considers the philosophical derivation of the world *from* God, and not *vice versa*, as the Leibnizian argument proceeds (which is dialectically directed at proving the existence of God from the actual existence of the world). In other words, he takes the existence of God for a premiss as he argumentatively positions himself on the point where the cosmological argument arrives at. But from this argumentative position, LESSING offers a different interpretation of the divine *perfection* from the one the cosmological argument, in the context of the theodicy, was based on. In this respect, it is perhaps philosophically not illegitimate to say that LESSING argumentatively-methodologically departs from a Leibnizian metaphysical position to arrive at a more Spinozistic one. By thinking consistently the *perfection* of God, LESSING will have to conclude that the created universe is ideally situated in the divine understanding, even though this is not explicitly asserted in the early and fragmentary *Das Christenthum der Vernunft*.

Despite this more or less latent Spinozistic tendency in his thought, LESSING related to Spinozism (and to the *anima mundi*-theory) only in a prohibitive tenor at this early stage of his career. This is revealed by the significant Section Three, Proposition Nine of the ironical essay, *Pope ein Metaphysiker!* (1755). Since, however, he composed that text in collaboration with his friend MENDELSSOHN, and since there is a scientific consensus that the relevant chapters are more MENDELSSOHN's work than his,¹⁸³ the relevant parts of *Pope ein Metaphysiker!* for us will be best

¹⁸¹In this text, LESSING conceives of the Holy Spirit as the harmony between God and His consubstantial image, the Christ (cf. §§ 9–12; *ibid.*, pp. 222–223).

¹⁸²A striking philosophical affinity is perceivable between LESSING's Christological position here and that of SCHELLING in *Über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*. SCHELLING, namely, describes in very similar terms the begetting of the Son, the very likeness (*Ebenbild*) of God, from the opaque ground of divine existence. The influence of BÖHME's theosophy is also evident in the following passage, especially as far as the concepts of *Sehnsucht* (*Begierde* in BÖHME), *Wort*, *Geist*, and *Wille* are concerned (cf. Sections 5 and 6 of Chapter 6): "Aber entsprechend der Sehnsucht, welche als der noch dunkle Grund die erste Regung göttlichen Daseins ist, erzeugt sich in Gott selbst eine innere reflexive Vorstellung, durch welche, da sie keinen andern Gegenstand haben kann als Gott, Gott sich selbst in einem Ebenbilde erblickt. Diese Vorstellung ist das erste, worin Gott, absolut betrachtet, verwirklicht ist, obgleich nur in ihm selbst; sie ist im Anfange bei Gott, und der in Gott gezeugte Gott selbst. Diese Vorstellung ist zugleich der Verstand – das Wort jener Sehnsucht, und der ewige Geist, der das Wort in sich und zugleich die unendliche Sehnsucht empfindet, von der Liebe bewogen, die er selbst ist, spricht das Wort aus, daß nun der Verstand mit der Sehnsucht zusammen in freischaffender und allmächtiger Wille wird und in der anfänglich regellosen Natur als in seinem Element oder Werkzeuge bildet." (SCHELLING *filiius* ed., I. Abth., Bd. 7, pp. 360–361; roman characters by SCHELLING.)

¹⁸³Cf. GÖPFERT's remark: "Der Consensus ist jedoch, daß Mendelssohn für die im engeren Sinne philosophisch-kritischen Passagen verantwortlich sei, also den ersten, zweiten und dritten »Abschnitt«, während die einleitenden Bemerkungen und der Anhang Lessings Werk seien ..." (GÖPFERT ed., vol. 3, p. 788.)

considered as a work of MENDELSSOHN'S, under Section 2 of Chapter 2 below. Yet, it seems worth pointing out that the *Anhang*, attributed by experts to LESSING, also analyzes the problematic concept of divine deliberation in respect of creation, and that, in any case, LESSING could not ignore his co-author's proposition in the above-mentioned *Satz* that 'Spinozism is an erroneous ("irrig") doctrine, which bears absolutely no philosophical relation to the world soul theory'.¹⁸⁴

The somewhat later *Ueber die Wirklichkeit der Dinge außer Gott* (appr. 1763) starts directly from a thesis propounding the intramundaneity of God or, better, the intradivinity of things, the *panentheistic* idea that the world is 'in God': "*However I try to explain the reality of things outside God, I have to confess that I can form no conception of it.*"¹⁸⁵ This openly anti-Leibnizian thesis seems a logical result of LESSING'S consideration that the ideas in the absolutely perfect divine mind may not lack any perfection which there is in the actually existing, finite entities. In his confrontation with the Wolffian concept of *existentia* (*Wirklichkeit, Daseyn*) understood as a *complementum possibilitatis*,¹⁸⁶ and with the Baumgartenian notion of being conceived as *omnimoda determinatio* (*durchgängige Bestimmung*),¹⁸⁷ LESSING sets down a *dilemma*, affirming that the idea of a thing in the divine intellect may not come short of the momentum that the respective thing *is*:

*If it (scil. the reality of things outside God) is called the 'complement of possibility,' I ask: Is there a concept of this complement of possibility in God or not? Who will venture to assert that there is not? But if there is a concept of it in him, then the thing itself is in him too.*¹⁸⁸ all things in him are themselves real.

¹⁸⁴No literal citation, but a summary of MENDELSSOHN'S assessment of Spinozism, and of the *anima mundi* theory, at the end of the above-mentioned passage (GÖPFERT ed., vol. 3, p. 662).

¹⁸⁵"*Ich mag mir die Wirklichkeit der Dinge außer Gott erklären, wie ich will, so muß ich bekennen, daß ich mir keinen Begriff davon machen kann.*" (LESSING *frater*, 1793–1795, part II, §. IV: *Spinozisterei*, p. 164 = GÖPFERT ed., vol. 8, p. 515. Transl. by H. B. NISBET ed., p. 30.)

¹⁸⁶Cf. WOLFF'S theses concerning the concept of existence in his *Philosophia prima, sive ontologia*, §§ 173–174: "§. 173. Praeter possibilitatem entis aliud quid adhuc requiritur, ut existat. *Pone enim praeter possibilitatem nihil requiri, ut ens existat. Existet igitur ideo, quia possibile, seu possibilitas erit ratio sufficiens ad existendum* (§. 70.): *quod cum sit absurdum* (§. 171.172.), *evidens est praeter possibilitatem adhuc aliud quid requiri, ut ens existat.* §. 174. *Hinc Existentiam definitio per complementum possibilitatis: quam definitionem nominalem esse patet* (§. 191. Log.), & *ad recte philosophandum utilem ipso opere experiemur.*" (ÉCOLE ed., II. Abt., Bd. 3, pp. 142–143.) H. B. NISBET refers us to WOLFF'S *Philosophia prima, sive ontologia* part I, sect. 2, ch. 3, § 23.

¹⁸⁷Cf. § 55 of BAUMGARTEN'S *Metaphysica*, which is an elaboration on (a more precise qualification of) the Wolffian concept of being: "*existentia (actus cf. §. 210 actualitas) est complexus affectionum in aliquo compossibilium i.e. complementum essentiae siue possibilitatis internae, quatenus haec tantum, ut complexus determinationum spectatur, § 40.*" (BAUMGARTEN, pp. 15–16) This definition interprets the Wolffian *complementum possibilitatis* as the 'totality of the affections compossible in a subject', which seems essentially equal to the concept of 'perfect determination'. KANT reflects on these concepts in the *Nova dilucidatio*, the *Einzig möglicher Beweisgrund* and in the *Vorlesungen über die Metaphysik*. Cf. BECK, pp. 453–454, for LEIBNIZ'S, WOLFF'S, BAUMGARTEN'S and the early KANT'S respective concepts of existence.

¹⁸⁸Here, H. B. NISBET refers us to SPINOZA'S *Ethica*, part I, proposition 15.

But, it will be said, the concept which God has of the reality of a thing does not preclude the reality of this thing outside him. Does it not? Then the reality outside him must have something which distinguishes it from the reality in his concept of it. That is, there must be something in the reality outside him of which God has no conception. An absurdity! But if there is nothing of this kind, if, in the concept which God has of the reality of a thing, everything is present that is to be found in its reality outside him, then the two realities are one, and everything which is supposed to exist outside God exists in him.

Or it may be said that the reality of a thing is the sum of all possible attributes that may pertain to it. Must not this sum also be present in the idea that God has of it? What attribute does the reality outside him have if its original image is not also to be found in God? Consequently this original image is the thing itself, and to say that the thing also exists outside this original image means duplicating the latter in a way that is as unnecessary as it is absurd.¹⁸⁹

The essence of this argument is that in God's mind, there may not be any idea which is not an, in absolutely every respect, complete or perfect image of the existing entity, of which it is the idea. Practically, says LESSING, the concept of the absolute perfection of divine cognition does not allow that an idea in the infinite divine mind may be *in respect of substance* different from the respective thing itself as existent. Thus, if existence is a 'determination' (*Bestimmung*, attribute) of a specific thing, if it is part of the exhaustive determination of the thing, then it must be *a fortiori* present in the creative divine archetype of the thing. The archetype, *das Urbild*, is, namely, the source of all attributes of the thing, while, on the other hand, the thing may not exist by a power *other than* the divine power inherent in the creative idea in God's mind. But if the archetype, as the source of the being of the thing, has the attribute of existence as well, then it will be impossible to really differentiate it, in respect of substance, from the thing itself. Hence,

¹⁸⁹“*Man nenne sie das Complement der Möglichkeit (= complementum possibilitatis); so frage ich: ist von diesem Complementary der Möglichkeit in Gott ein Begriff, oder keiner? Wer wird das Letztere behaupten wollen? Ist aber ein Begriff davon in ihm; so ist die Sache selbst in ihm; so sind alle Dinge in ihm selbst wirklich. Aber, wird man sagen, der Begriff, welchen Gott von der Wirklichkeit eines Dinges hat, hebt die Wirklichkeit dieses Dinges außer ihm nicht auf. Nicht? So muß die Wirklichkeit außer ihm etwas haben, was sie von der Wirklichkeit in seinem Begriffe unterscheidet. Das ist: in der Wirklichkeit außer ihm muß etwas sein, wovon Gott keinen Begriff hat. Eine Ungereimtheit! Ist aber nichts dergleichen, ist in dem Begriffe, den Gott von der Wirklichkeit eines Dinges hat, alles zu finden, was in dessen Wirklichkeit außer ihm anzutreffen: so sind beide Wirklichkeiten Eins, und alles, was außer Gott existiren soll, existirt in Gott. Oder man sage: die Wirklichkeit eines Dinges sey der Inbegriff aller möglichen Bestimmungen (=omnimoda determinatio) die ihm zukommen können. Muß nicht dieser Inbegriff auch in der Idee Gottes seyn? Welche Bestimmung hat das Wirkliche außer ihm, wenn nicht auch das Urbild in Gott zu finden wäre? Folglich ist dieses Urbild das Ding selbst, und sagen, daß das Ding auch außer diesem Urbild existere, heißt, dessen Urbild auf eine eben so unnöthige als ungereimte Weise verdoppeln.*” (LESSING *frater* ed., 1793–1795, pp. 164–165 = GÖPFERT ed., vol. 8, pp. 515–516. Transl. by H. B. NISBET ed., p. 30, set-out characters by LESSING.)

essentially, *God*, the divine mind, is the *world* (or, *vice versa*, the world is God). And, if this thesis is systematically to be completed with LESSING'S trinitological conception, then we may hypothetically conclude that *Christ* as the creative λόγος and *mundus intelligibilis* is the *world-word*, for LESSING.

But a valid counter-argument to this argumentation seems to be that, in principle, an idea has a mere *referential* role, and that it seems justified to speak of an 'idea' precisely from the moment that it is modally *different* from *die Sache selbst* (inasmuch as it is only the *possible* positing of the thing). Yet, from the perspective of a *Spinozistic* concept of substance, LESSING'S proposition remains entirely thinkable: if *cogitatio* (*Idee*) and *extensio* are manifestations of the numerically same substance, then there is no contradiction in saying that the archetype (idea) of an actually existing thing is the thing itself, *die Sache selbst*. It might be in this Spinozistic perspective as well, then, that LESSING still wishes to maintain the ontological difference between God (as infinite) and the things themselves (as finite) in a subsequent passage.¹⁹⁰

This Spinozistic interpretation of *Ueber die Wirklichkeit der Dinge außer Gott* might be further corroborated by what LESSING propounds in another short text written simultaneously, the *Durch Spinoza ist Leibniz nur auf die Spur der vorherbestimmten Harmonie gekommen* (1763). LESSING here displays an interest in, and a deep philosophical understanding of, SPINOZA'S thesis concerning the substantial identity of body and soul.¹⁹¹

Finally, in § 73 of *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts* (full text ready by 1780 at the latest), LESSING engages in trinitological (more precisely, Christological) speculations that thematically-argumentatively border on, though do not extend to, the panentheistic thesis that the world is in God. LESSING here no longer examines the concept of the creation of the world as his investigation is restricted to the necessary existence (*notwendige Wirklichkeit*) of the second person of the Trinity:

¹⁹⁰ Cf. "... warum sollen nicht die Begriffe, die Gott von den wirklichen Dingen hat, diese wirklichen Dingen selbst seyn? Sie sind von Gott noch immer genugsam unterschieden, und ihre Wirklichkeit wird darum noch nichts weniger als nothwendig, weil sie in ihm wirklich sind." (*Ibid.*, p. 166 = GÖPFERT *ibid.*, p. 516; underlining added.)

¹⁹¹ Cf. "Die Seele, sagt Spinoza an einem andern Orte (T. II. (of the Sittenlehre) §. 163), ist mit dem Leibe auf eben die Art vereinigt, als der Begriff der Seele von sich selbst mit der Seele vereinigt ist. Nun gehöret der Begriff, den die Seele von sich selbst hat, mit zu dem Wesen der Seele, und keines läßt sich ohne das andere gedenken. Also auch der Leib läßt sich nicht ohne die Seele gedenken, und nur dadurch, daß sich keines ohne das andere gedenken läßt, dadurch, daß beide eben dasselbe einzelne Ding sind, sind sie nach Spinoza's Meinung mit einander vereinigt." (*Ibid.*, pp. 168–169 = GÖPFERT *ibid.*, pp. 517–518; set-out characters by LESSING.) LESSING cites from the 1744 German edition of SPINOZA'S *Ethica* (B. v. S. *Sittenlehre widerleget von dem berühmten Weltweisen unserer Zeit Herrn Christian Wolf*. Aus dem Lateinischen übersetzt. Frankfurt und Leipzig, 1744; cf. ÉCOLE ed., §. III: *Materialien und Dokumente*, vol. 15). In the first line of our citation, LESSING refers to a marginal numbering of passages of the *Sittenlehre* which was superadded to SPINOZA'S original text in the German edition. '§ 163' in this system of reference denotes part II, proposition 21 of the *Ethica* (ÉCOLE ed., §. III, vol. 15, p. 138).

*Must God not at least have the most complete representation of himself, i.e., a representation which contains everything which is present within him? But would it include everything within him if it contained only a representation, only a possibility of his necessary reality, as well as of his other qualities? This possibility exhausts the essence of his other qualities. But does it also exhaust that of his necessary reality? I think not. – Consequently, God can either have no complete representation of himself, or this complete representation is just as necessarily real as he himself is, etc.*¹⁹²

Although LESSING, only slightly later than, or perhaps simultaneously with, *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts*, suggested that Christ is a merely human being,¹⁹³ here he considers a possible, natural theological argument in favour of the Scriptural doctrine about the Son of God. This is in line with the objective of *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts*, which is to show that the Biblical revelation was a divine instrument for the (moral and theological) education of mankind, before the natural dialectic capacities of human reason could grow powerful enough, in the course of historical time, to draw the relevant conclusions alone.

Essentially, LESSING repeats the same argument as we have seen in *Das Christenthum der Vernunft* concerning Christ as a perfect image of the Father, with the notable difference that this time the Cabbalistic logic of the representation of divine essence is not applied to the doctrine of the creation of the world (as it is in SCHELLING's *Über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*). But since the argument is the same, there is ground to suspect that the lack of that (potentially pantheistic) thesis is due to the external circumstance that LESSING wanted to, and did, disclose this text to the general public. In fact, we have seen how cautious the contemporary ÖTINGER also was when he discussed his similarly tinged theory of creation in his writings destined for publication.

Hence, we end this particular investigation with a philosophically grounded suspicion. We have seen how LESSING, throughout the texts enumerated here, tended to conceive a potentially pantheistic metaphysics by arguing, from the concept of infinite divine perfection, that finite things can only exist *in God* (thus, necessarily, as parts, in an undetermined sense, of the divine substance). We have also seen how he combined this probably Cabbalistic conception with trinitological considerations, and that he still kept vacillating about the divinity of Christ till the end of his life. The latent pantheistic-Spinozistic tendency of his theological speculations seems to have grown stronger as himself grew older. Thus, our suspicion is that JACOBI did not deviate from

¹⁹²“*Muß Gott wenigstens nicht die vollständige Vorstellung von sich selbst haben? d. i. eine Vorstellung, in der sich alles befindet, was in ihm selbst ist. Würde sich aber alles in ihr finden, was in ihm selbst ist, wenn auch von seiner notwendigen Wirklichkeit, so wie von seinen übrigen Eigenschaften, sich bloß eine Vorstellung, sich bloß eine Möglichkeit fände? Diese Möglichkeit erschöpft das Wesen seiner übrigen Eigenschaften: aber auch seiner notwendigen Wirklichkeit? Mich dünkt nicht. – Folglich kann entweder Gott gar keine vollständige Vorstellung von sich selbst haben: oder diese vollständige Vorstellung ist eben so notwendig wirklich, als er es selbst ist etc.*” (GÖPFERT ed., vol. 8, p. 505. Transl. by H. B. NISBET ed., p. 235; highlighting by LESSING.)

¹⁹³See above § 1 of *Die Religion Christi*; LESSING *frater* ed., 1784, p. 103.

historical truth when he put into LESSING'S mouth the famous statement that "*The orthodox concepts of the divinity are no longer for me; I cannot stand them. Hen kai Pan! I know naught else*",¹⁹⁴ during their morning conversation of 6 July 1780. We are now going to prop up this suspicion further by arguing for JACOBI'S veracity through a demonstration of the psychological coherence his personality and behaviour displayed in his account of his philosophical discussions with LESSING (Section 13). Our subsequent points (Section 14 and Section 1 of Chapter 8) will then examine how LESSING, after an initial refusal to think the *anima mundi*-theory, turned toward it as he was parallelly also developing a philosophical sympathy for Spinozism.

10 The Psychological Coherence of JACOBI'S Personality, and His Own Philosophical Relation to Spinozism, as Intrinsic Guarantees for His Veracity in the *Spinozismus-Streit*. The Historical Philosophical Truthfulness of JACOBI'S Account of LESSING'S '*eigenes System*'

The main objective of our present short point is to ward off a major general objection which has been repeatedly raised throughout two centuries against the serious philosophical study of Friedrich Heinrich JACOBI'S (1743–1819) book on LESSING'S Spinozism. This objection is, put plainly, that JACOBI simply fabricated LESSING'S Spinozistic statements, as there is allegedly no philosophical or other evidence that the *historical* LESSING, essentially a rational theologian of a latitudinarian tradition (or, as JACOBI put it, "*ein rechtgläubiger Deist*"),¹⁹⁵ ever developed heterodox (Spinozistic and so potentially 'heretic', pantheistic or 'atheistic') tendencies in his philosophy of God. It is known that the first major thinker to disbelieve JACOBI was MENDELSSOHN himself. But even today, some specialists are convinced that MENDELSSOHN was essentially right, and that JACOBI'S book, *On the Doctrine of Spinoza, in Epistles to Mr Moses Mendelssohn* (1785)¹⁹⁶ is, as far as it concerns LESSING'S Spinozism, almost entirely fiction. Hence, it seemed to us essential that (before we propose a presentation and a philosophical analysis of LESSING'S peculiar idea concerning God as the universal soul, as it is related by JACOBI) we try to prove, also from the perspective of JACOBI'S personality and personal philosophical convictions, that there is no reason to disbelieve him.

¹⁹⁴ "*Die orthodoxen Begriffe von der Gottheit sind nicht mehr für mich; ich kann sie nicht genießen. Έν και πάν! Ich weiß nichts anders.*" (English transl. by G. VALLÉE ed., pp. 9–10.)

¹⁹⁵ *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza ...*, 1785 edition; GA, *Werke*, vol. 1/1, p. 39.

¹⁹⁶ *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza in Briefen an den Herrn Moses Mendelssohn*, ¹1785, ²1789, third, posth. ed. in vol. IV of JACOBI'S *Werke*, 1819. The three editions are significantly different in content; see the historical-critical edition of Kl. HAMMACHER and I.-M. PISKE in GA (see this abbreviation in bibliography), *Werke*, vol. 1/1. Though the third edition of *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza ...* came out posthumously, the text had been still prepared for the press by JACOBI himself, just before his death.

We are saying “*also* from the perspective of JACOBI’s personality, etc.” because we believe that in the preceding chapter we rendered it to some extent philosophically plausible that LESSING’s theology, rational as it was, had the latent systematic possibility of a turn towards a Cabbalistic-Spinozistic speculative theory of God. Better, Kl. HAMMACHER offered an overwhelming amount of external (philological and historical) evidence in favour of JACOBI’s veracity in respect of LESSING’s Spinozism (understood in the specific sense of a pantheism expressed by the motto *ἔν καὶ πᾶν*).¹⁹⁷ Yet, it seems that still not all aspects of a possible defence of the authenticity of JACOBI’s account have been exhausted and that the intrinsic evidence proffered by the coherence of his psychological constitution, and by his characteristic philosophical thought, may yield further reinforcement of his case.

JACOBI’s psychological constitution and characteristic philosophical thought seem intimately interrelated when contemplated from the perspective of the metaphysical problem posed by Spinozism. In this respect, the first circumstance to be weighed is perhaps the self-characterization JACOBI gives of his own personality in the introduction of his first letter to MENDELSSOHN (4 Nov. 1783), sent to the addressee through the mediation of Elise REIMARUS. The often neglected first part of the epistle is, namely, the expression of a human character that seeks to be accepted as a disciple of, and longs to be philosophically acknowledged by, inspired and authoritative intellectual masters, whom he considers to be in possession of higher philosophical truth and intuition (“*Geister, die aus innerem Bedürfniß nach der Wahrheit forschen ... keiner davon so gering ist, den man nicht mit Vortheil hörte.*”)¹⁹⁸ That JACOBI, as a voluntary disciple of oracular personalities, is seeking, perhaps first and foremost, intellectual *protection* under their guidance from *philosophical problems* that he considers himself, or human reason in general, intellectually too weak to resolve, becomes in part clear from how he specifies the objective of his visit with LESSING in Wolfenbüttel: “... *through him I longed to conjure up the spirit of the many sages whom I could not get to respond to me on certain topics.*”¹⁹⁹ While K. HAMMACHER convincingly argues that one of these ‘wise men to

¹⁹⁷ HAMMACHER 1982; cf. in especial pp. 88–89 (see extensive and important footnotes as well). Cf. also HAMMACHER 1985; in especial, pp. 53–55. On LESSING’s usage of *ἔν καὶ πᾶν* as an expressive summary of his theology, cf. JACOBI’s statement: “*Daß Lessing das ἔν καὶ Πᾶν, als den Inbegriff seiner Theologie und Philosophie, öfter und mit Nachdruck anführte, können mehrere bezeugen. Er sagte und er schrieb es, bey Gelegenheiten, als seinen ausgemachten Wahlspruch.*” (*Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza ...*; GA, *Werke*, vol. 1/1, p. 40.)

¹⁹⁸ *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza ...*, 1785 edition; GA, *Werke*, vol. 1/1, p. 14 (our citations from JACOBI’s SPINOZA-book invariably go back to the first, 1785 edition, unless otherwise indicated; original orthography throughout).

¹⁹⁹ “... *ich sehnte mich, in ihm die Geister mehrerer Weisen zu beschwören, die ich über gewisse Dinge nicht zur Sprache bringen könnte.*” (*Ibid.*, p. 15. Transl. by G. VALLÉE et al., p.84.) In the second and third editions, JACOBI cited in footnote his original letter to LESSING, in which the corresponding paragraph reads as follows: “*Ich sehne mich unaussprechlich nach jenen Tagen; auch darum, weil ich die Geister einiger Seher in Ihnen beschwören und zur Sprache bringen möchte, die mir nicht genug antworten.*” (*Ibid.*)

be evoked' may be identified with H. S. REIMARUS,²⁰⁰ JACOBI further indicates, in his truly epoch-making dialogue with LESSING in the morning of 7 July 1780, that he is seeking philosophical instruction more specifically against the unsurmountable metaphysical difficulties posed by Spinozism (cf. "*I had come chiefly in the hope of receiving your help against Spinoza*").²⁰¹

We then see the candidate-disciple engage with the elderly master in a philosophical conversation the first outcome of which is that the authority whom JACOBI sought out precisely as a *defensor fidei* entertains heterodox views about the nature of God! Although in the rest of the dialogue JACOBI continues to behave as a disciple (he invariably strives to come to a least philosophical common denominator with LESSING, so he is disposed to interpret LESSING'S successive Spinozistic–Cabbalistic metaphysical statements in the philosophically most favourable manner), still, it remains undoubted that his main motive for starting the whole discussion has been to consult an oracular personality for *rational, philosophically articulated arguments* against a metaphysical system, Spinozism, which he found not only impossible to refute on his own, but also unacceptable for many of its conclusions, like, e.g., the denial of the liberty of the freedom of the will (fatalism), etc. Importantly, JACOBI philosophically demonstrates, in his fictive French conversation with SPINOZA (originally part of a letter to HEMSTERHUIS),²⁰² that historical Spinozism as a metaphysical system is a dialectically-argumentatively *strong* opponent of Biblical–Pietistic theism in most domains of a fundamental theological importance. Unlike BAYLE, who acknowledged SPINOZA'S *moral* excellence only (cf. Sections 7 and 8), JACOBI does recognize the huge *intellectual* potential of Spinozism, and is even short of arguments when confronted with this metaphysical-ideological adversary. In the imaginary dialogue, JACOBI, having discussed, first and foremost, the problem of free will and determinism, as well as the metaphysical concept of God, with 'SPINOZA', ultimately *gives up* the argumentation (SPINOZA has literally the last word), and closes the dialogue addressing HEMSTERHUIS in the following manner:

I dare ask you to give me more instructions in order to combat Spinoza's arguments against the intelligent and personal character of the First Principle, against free will and final causes. I have always been unable to refute his arguments with good metaphysics. But it is vital to find counter-arguments and to be able to disprove his claims because without this, it is in vain to have destroyed Spinoza's theory in what it positively asserts, in so far as his supporters will wage war on us all the same, they will barricade themselves even behind the debris of the tumbled system, saying that we are replacing a thing which is but mean-

²⁰⁰ Cf. HAMMACHER 1985, in especial pp. 55–56.

²⁰¹ "*Ich war großen Theils gekommen, um von Ihnen Hilfe gegen den Spinoza zu erhalten.*" (*Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza ...*; GA, Werke, vol. 1/1, p. 17. Transl. by G. VALLÉE et al., p. 10.)

²⁰² JACOBI'S letter to HEMSTERHUIS of 7 August 1784 in *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza ...*; GA, Werke, vol. 1/1, pp. 55–85.

*ingless with a thing which is no less than manifestly absurd and that it is not like this that we must philosophize.*²⁰³

Thus, in strict philosophical terms, suggests JACOBI, Spinozism seems a logically equally coherent and defensible alternative of a theory of God conceived as a free and intelligent, extramundane efficient cause.²⁰⁴ In the *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza ...*, JACOBI's final position concerning the argumentative refutation of Spinozism is that there seems to be no rational, logically articulatable philosophical remedy against it. Hence, we have to depend, for a true concept of God, on a very different faculty of the mind, which is not disabled by the impotence of discursive reasoning: faith (*Glaube*).²⁰⁵ JACOBI propounds that through free obedience to a revealed divine commandment, an understanding of God is formed in the 'heart', and not in the intellect,²⁰⁶ but he is reticent on the modality of this concept-formation, i.e., on the metaphysical conditions of the intellectual mechanism which yields a philosophically acceptable concept of God. Paradoxically, JACOBI's own philosophy of God is thus a (sometimes utterly banal) refusal to philosophize, and a turn to revealed religion. The concept of God, in stricter philosophical terms, remains here mysteriously unthinkable, perhaps even hypothetical. As soon as we start to *think* God philosophically, says JACOBI, we become entangled in a metaphysical debate in

²⁰³ "J'ose vous en (scil. de vos instructions) demander pour combattre les argumens de Spinoza contre l'intelligence & la personnalité du premier principe, la volonté libre & les causes finales, argumens dont je n'ai jamais pu venir à bout avec de la bonne métaphysique. Cependant il est essentiel d'en découvrir & de pouvoir en démontrer les défauts, puisque sans cela nous aurions beau avoir renversé la théorie de Spinoza dans ce qu'elle a de positif, ses adhérens n'en continueroient pas moins vivement la guerre, ils se retrancheroient jusques dans les débris du système écroulé, en disant que nous mettons une absurdité évidente à la place de ce qui n'est qu'incompréhensible, & que ce n'est pas ainsi qu'on fait de la philosophie." (*Ibid.*, p. 87. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI; roman characters by JACOBI; underlining added.)

²⁰⁴ In his main conversation with LESSING, JACOBI propounds essentially the same thesis of the equivalence, in respect of logical coherence, of theism with Spinozism, while he maintains their inequality in respect of metaphysical validity, cf.: "Ich habe keinen Begriff der inniger, als der von den Endursachen wäre; keine lebendigere Ueberzeugung, als daß ich thue was ich denke, anstatt, daß ich nur denken sollte was ich thue. Freylich muß ich dabey eine Quelle des Denkens und Handelns annehmen, die mir durchaus unerklärlich bleibt. Will ich aber schlechterdings erklären, so muß ich auf den zweyten Satz gerathen, dessen Anwendung auf einzelne Fälle, und in seinem ganzen Umfange betrachtet, kaum ein menschlicher Verstand ertragen kann." (*Ibid.*, p. 28.)

²⁰⁵ Cf. the last three of JACOBI's six theses on Spinozism and faith (*ibid.*, pp. 124–125): "IV. Jeder Weg der Demonstration geht in den Fatalismus aus. V. Wir können nur Aehnlichkeiten demonstriren; und jeder Erweis setzt etwas schon Erwiesenes voraus, wovon das Principium Offenbarung ist. VI. Das Element aller menschlichen Erkenntniß und Würksamkeit, ist Glaube." Both D. HENRICH and M. FRANK point out the importance of JACOBI's *Spinozabüchlein* for the Tübingen period in the intellectual development of HÖLDERLIN, HEGEL and SCHELLING. HENRICH argues that the friends read the second edition (1789) of this book and contends, in harmony with FRANK, that it was especially the 7th Appendix that rose their interest (HENRICH, p. 207–210; FRANK, p. 36).

²⁰⁶ To support his point that truth is known not through rational demonstration, JACOBI cites PASCAL, who says that "Nous avons une impuissance à prouver, invincible à tout le Dogmatisme. Nous avons une idée de la vérité, invincible à tout le Pyrrhonisme." (*Ibid.*, p. 130.)

which speculative reason will stay suspended between the respective options of Spinozism and theism.²⁰⁷

We may argue, then, for the authenticity of JACOBI'S account also on the ground that his thought and personality display a remarkable coherence in respect of the metaphysical problem of Spinozism. His report of his discussion concerning SPINOZA with LESSING, when seen in the context of his correspondence with MENDELSSOHN and HEMSTERHUIS, and viewed by the light of his psychological self-characterization, seems a completely logical and coherent account, as it reveals that the origins and motive power of the whole debate about Spinozism are deeply rooted in his relation, or reaction, to the complex of metaphysical problems he felt himself in particular, and human reason in general, dialectically unable to cope with. On the other hand, LESSING'S reticence about his heterodox theological views toward his older friends may be explained by HAMMACHER'S supposition that LESSING could not expect an understanding reaction, in this respect, on the part of thinkers of the 'old' Leibnizian-Wolffian metaphysical school like MENDELSSOHN, while, in turn, he could count on the younger JACOBI'S more 'modern' philosophical culture, sensitivity and orientation.²⁰⁸

But the text of the *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza ...* is a source of further intrinsic philosophical evidence as well, as it gives a bird's eye view also of the mature LESSING'S own system, 'eigenes System'. What we learn about his theological speculations from this book is in far-reaching concord with the Cabbalistic–Spinozistic metaphysical ideas we encountered in our previous discussion of some, only posthumously published, key texts from *Lessing's theologischer Nachlass*, etc. Namely, LESSING, at the very beginning of the 7 July 1780 morning conversation with JACOBI, states his preference for an unorthodox concept of God,²⁰⁹ for a religion which does not depend on written word (i.e., on 'traditional' revelation),²¹⁰ for a rational conceptual derivation of fundamental theological ideas and doctrines,²¹¹ and in that context, for a rational defence against superstition and bigotry.²¹² Most

²⁰⁷ JACOBI expounds his own (anti-)philosophy in the last fifteen pages of *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza ...* (*ibid.*, pp. 130–145).

²⁰⁸ Cf. KI. HAMMACHER 1982, p. 89: "Wie aber Lessings Verhalten gegenüber J. A. H. Reimarus vermuten lässt, vertraute er tatsächlich diese seine pantheistischen Überzeugungen gerade seinen alten Freunden nicht an, weil diese dafür kein Verständnis zeigten, dagegen konnte er dies Jacobi anvertrauen, weil dieser in einer anderen Welt lebte und mit den westlichen noch weit anstößigeren Aufklärungsthesen vertraut war."

²⁰⁹ Cf. "Die orthodoxen Begriffe von der Gottheit sind nicht mehr für mich; ich kann sie nicht genießen." (GA, Werke, vol. 1/1, p. 15.)

²¹⁰ Cf. "Ich. (scil. JACOBI) ... im Spinoza steht mein Credo nicht. Leßing. Ich will hoffen, es steht in keinem Buche." (*Ibid.*, p. 20; roman characters by JACOBI.)

²¹¹ Cf. "Leßing blieb dabey: daß er sich alles »natürlich ausgebeten haben wollte«;..." (*ibid.*, p. 31).

²¹² Cf. LESSING'S argument against JACOBI'S distinction between what is natural and what is supernatural: "... die Grenze die Sie setzen wollen läßt sich nicht bestimmen. Und an der andern Seite geben Sie der Träumerey, dem Unsinne, der Blindheit freyes offenes Feld." (*Ibid.*, p. 29.)

importantly, however, he rejects the concept of a personal extramundane God, as JACOBI points out even twice. 'Personal' in the present case refers to a first efficient cause having *intelligence*, free *volition* and a *power* of creation, which, with a *considered* choice, decides to make the universe, while 'extramundane' refers to an entity that is the condition of the *concatenatio rerum finitarum* (the world), substantially different from the world itself. JACOBI relates LESSING's theses in summary:

*Lessing could not come to terms with the idea of a personal and absolutely infinite being in the unchanging enjoyment of its supreme perfection. He associated with it such an impression of infinite boredom that it caused him pain and apprehension.*²¹³

*... Lessing does not believe in a cause of things, which is distinct from the world, or ..., Lessing is a Spinozist ...*²¹⁴

The hereby adumbrated metaphysical position essentially coincides with the one exposed more at length in (the only posthumously published) *Das Christenthum der Vernunft*, and in the *Über die Wirklichkeit der Dinge außer Gott*. If the efficient cause of the existence and essence of the world is not (numerically) different from its effect, then the constituent parts of the world have no existence (*Wirklichkeit*) 'outside' the divine substance – which is precisely the metaphysical thesis of the fragment *Über die Wirklichkeit der Dinge außer Gott*. As there is scarcely any reason, then, to believe that JACOBI could access the posthumously (1784 and 1793–1795, respectively) published documents at the time when he wrote his first letter to MENDELSSOHN (4 November 1783), it is reasonable to draw the conclusion that he learned about LESSING's Cabbalistic–Spinozistic theological speculations from LESSING himself.

Hence, we have now seen how the psychological constitution of JACOBI's personality, his specific philosophical relation to the problem complex of Spinozism, and his account of the mature LESSING's theological intuitions together speak for the historical truthfulness of his *reportatio* of the metaphysical dialogues he conducted with the elderly master. As is known, one peculiar statement of LESSING's concerned God as the soul of the universe, "*als die Seele des Alls*". In our following point, we set out to discover the possible Cabbalistic theosophical–theological background of that statement, so that we may interpret it properly, both in historical and systematic respects. As it will be seen, LESSING's idea here of a 'pulsating' God goes, in all likelihood, back to the doctrine of *tsim-tsum* (the creative contraction and expansion of God), of what is called the philosophically oriented new Cabbala (*Cabbala recentior*), especially as it was expounded by its two most representative authors, I. LURIA and A. C. HERRERA, and then popularized in Latin epitomes of their major works, the *D^e rushim* and the *Puerta del cielo*, respectively, by VON ROSENROTH in the *Kabbala denudata*.

²¹³“Mit der Idee eines persönlichen schlechterdings unendlichen Wesens, in dem unveränderlichen Genusse seiner allerhöchsten Vollkommenheit, konnte sich Lessing nicht vertragen. Er verknüpfte mit derselben eine solche Vorstellung von unendlicher Langerweile, daß ihm angst und weh dabei wurde.” (*Ibid.*, p. 34. Transl. by H. B. NISBET ed., p. 253, highlighting by the translator.)

²¹⁴“Leßing glaubt keine von der Welt unterschiedene Ursache der Dinge, oder; Leßing ist ein Spinozist” (*Ibid.*, p. 41. Transl. by G. VALLÉE et al., p. 103.)

11 LESSING'S Statement About God Conceived as the World Soul (1): His Philosophical Sympathy for a Cabbalistic Spinozism, According to the Presentation of JACOBI'S *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza* (1785). Historical Derivation of LESSING'S Concept of the Cosmogonical Contraction of God, and Its Philosophical Delimitation from the *tsim-tsum* of the Cabbala: book *B^erēshith* of the *Zohar* (1280–1286); and ROSENROTH'S Latin Epitomes (resp. 1677 & 1678) of I. LURIA'S *Sepher ha-D^erushim* (doctrine propounded 1569–1572, text compiled 1573–1576, edited 1620) and of A. C. HERRERA'S *Puerta del cielo ...* (comp. prob. betw. 1602–1635) as Possible Sources of LESSING'S Conception

Our main thesis in the following two points is that the proposition, attributed by JACOBI to LESSING in *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza* concerning the conceivability of a 'personal' Godhead as a shrinking and spreading universal soul, is philosophically best interpreted from the perspective of the theosophical and theological speculations of medieval and early modern Jewish Cabbala. While substantiating this thesis, we shall try to reconstruct the historical–philosophical background of LESSING'S hypothetical proposition about the world soul in great detail, laying emphasis not only on the interpretation of the concept of the world soul in his statement, but also on that of its broader context: the idea of the cosmogonical 'pulsation' of God.

In particular, we will first argue that the concept of a cosmogonical 'pulsation' of God, hypothetically proposed by LESSING, ultimately goes back to the semi-mythical or proto-philosophical theory of the expansion of God in (e.g., the first part, *B^erēshith*, of) the main text of the *Zohar*. More importantly, we shall further suggest that LESSING could know of this (originally Neoplatonic emanationist) idea of the *Zohar* through the mediation of rabbinical thinkers belonging to the philosophically inclined, early modern Jewish Cabbalistic school referred to in the epoch as *Cabbala recentior*. Outstanding representatives of this late sixteenth-, early seventeenth-century speculative theological movement were rabbi Isaac LURIA (also spelt 'LORIA', educated in Egypt and active in Palestine, 1534–1572), and his spiritual disciple, Abraham Cohen HERRERA (also spelt 'IRIRA', of Spanish Jewish origin, but born in Italy, and active in Amsterdam, approx. 1550–1635).²¹⁵ Our proposition is that LURIA'S cosmogonical views, as first redacted by his immediate

²¹⁵On LURIA'S and HERRERA'S respective biographies, cf. SCHOLEM'S introduction ("Abraham Cohen Herrera – *Leben, Werk und Wirkung*") to the modern German translation (*Das Buch שער השמים oder Pforte des Himmels*) of the Latin epitome of HERRERA'S work, in SCHOLEM ed., pp. 12–13, 16–17 and 21. For LURIA, see also GERSCHOM 1978, pp. 420–428, and the corresponding article in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (both with further bibliography).

disciple H. VITAL between 1573 and 1576, then edited by others in the Hebrew manuscript, *Sepher ha-D'rushim* ('Book of disquisitions') around 1620,²¹⁶ and HERRERA'S Spanish manuscript, *Puerta del Cielo, y lus para entrar en la Capacidad y ynteligencia dela Cabala* ('Gateway to Heaven, and Light, for Entering into the Capacity and Understanding of the Cabbala', composed probably between 1602 and 1635, and which is to date unpublished but still exists),²¹⁷ as translated into Hebrew and published in Amsterdam in 1655 by Aboab de FONSECA,²¹⁸ were both, as epitomized in Latin by Christian Freiherr KNORR VON ROSENROTH, the chief sources of LESSING'S conceptions about the periodical expansions and contractions of God, the *tsim-tsum* or *contractio Dei*. On this account, LESSING seems additionally to have reached back to other early modern Jewish Cabbalistic sources (see below), likewise translated into Latin and published by VON ROSENROTH in the *Kabbala denudata*.

Baron ROSENROTH (1636–1689),²¹⁹ a councillor of prince CHRISTIAN AUGUST von Sulzbach, published significantly shortened Latin epitomes of both these texts in his still, to this day, ground-breaking, anonymous publication of medieval and early modern Jewish Cabbalistic theosophical and philosophical sources, in the ponderous two-volume *The Cabbala Unclothed (Kabbala denudata seu doctrina Hebraeorum transcendentalis et metaphysica atque theologica*, vol. I: Sulzbach,

²¹⁶ On the topsy-turvy *Entstehungsgeschichte* of the *Sepher ha-D'rushim*, see SCHOLEM 1978, pp. 425 and 445, where SCHOLEM asserts that this unprinted text, compiled around 1620 by B. ha-LEVI and E. VESTALI, is based on H. VITAL'S voluminous redaction ("Ets Hayyim", i.e., "Tree of life") of rabbi LURIA'S teachings. Although doubly inauthentic as compared to the original doctrine, such manuscript collections as this were in circulation under the name of I. LURIA from the middle of the seventeenth century, says SCHOLEM.

²¹⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 19–22. SCHOLEM specified that the three then existing Spanish manuscripts of the *Puerta del Cielo* ... were respectively in the library of the Portuguese-Israelite community of Amsterdam, in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek Den Haag, and in the Columbia University Library in New York. Our bibliographical inquiry has revealed that the Columbia University copy is no longer found or extant today (2010). For a full description of the Den Haag copy, which we have used, go to headword HERRERA in our bibliography.

²¹⁸ ROSENROTH'S Latin epitome of HERRERA'S work was based on a significantly abbreviated Hebrew translation, entitled שער השמים (*Sha'ar Hashamayim*, Amsterdam, 1655), of the manuscript *Puerta del cielo*. The translator dropped the philosophically less interesting, first two books of HERRERA'S text (cf. SCHOLEM ed., 1974, pp. 26–27). On the translator, Isaac Aboab DE FONSECA (1605–1693), who was a teacher in the Talmudic school of Amsterdam, see doc. № 58 in FREUDENTHAL 2006, vol. 1, p. 237.

²¹⁹ A general introduction to baron ROSENROTH'S life, thought and work is Kurt SALECKER'S monography (see bibliography). Unfortunately, SALECKER'S book concentrates on ROSENROTH'S spirituality as it is mirrored especially in ROSENROTH'S religious poetry, and does not give a really detailed historical and philosophical analysis of his today best-known work, the *Kabbala denudata*. A brief but good summary on ROSENROTH is in SCHOLEM 1978, pp. 416–418 (same text in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*). Just as good but longer is the section on ROSENROTH (pp. 103–109) in BENZ 1979. By contrast, K. REICHERT'S 1997 paper on ROSENROTH and H. MORE is in almost every point mistaken.

1677; appendix to vol. I: Sulzbach, 1678; vol. II: Frankfurt, 1684).²²⁰ By virtue of the *Kabbala denudata*, the early modern Jewish Cabbalistic theory of the *tsim-tsum* (צמצום, *Zimzum*) or creative contraction of God (*restrictio/contractio/compressio Dei*) could gain universal recognition in the republic of letters in Germany, as ROSENROTH'S work was acclaimed (even by LEIBNIZ, who knew the author personally) and widely read.

Again, it is part of our thesis that the Christian Cabbalist luminary, Henry MORE (1614–1687), the renowned Cambridge Neoplatonist theologian who authored, among other writings on the *Mercabha*²²¹ and the Cabbala, the major exegetic work, *Conjectura Cabbalistica* (1653),²²² also exerted an influence on LESSING'S thought, especially by virtue of the short, ironical and critical *Fundamenta Philosophiae sive Cabbalae Aëto-paëdo-melissaeae* (“*The Fundamentals of the Philosophy or Cabbala, of the Eagle-Child-Bee*”, last three words of the title in Greek), which, together with several other texts of his, was included by VON ROSENROTH in the *Kabbala denudata*.²²³

Albeit MORE, a creationist, does not posit in his own philosophy a contraction of God,²²⁴ and though he rejects LURIA'S idea that God brought forth physical space by producing a cavity in the centre of His extended spiritual substance (“... *manifestum est verum Deum ... non posse subducere se a puncto ut Vacuum fiat in quo Mundi sint creandi*”),²²⁵ his name still became associated with Cabbalistic ideas in

²²⁰See modern reprographical edition under PEUCKERT and RANKE, eds. in the bibliography. The Latin translation of part one of the compilation of Rabbi LURIA'S teachings (*Sepher ha-D'rushim*, ‘*Liber Druschim*’) is to be found in the first volume of the *Kabbala denudata* (pp. 28–51), while the Latin epitome of HERRERA'S theology (entitled *Porta caelorum. In quo Dogmata Cabbalistica de Aen-Soph, Adam Kadmon, Zimzum, Aziluth ... Philosophice proponuntur & explicantur, cumque Philosophia Platonica conferuntur*), was attached by ROSENROTH as an appendix to the same volume. This appendix appeared apart from, and a year later than, volume one of the *Kabbala denudata*, and consequently, it also has a page numbering of its own, though it contains in principle the third and fourth parts of volume one of the *Kabbala denudata*.

²²¹*Mercabha* (Hebr. the ‘throne (of God)’) is the name of the Jewish mystical movement, centered around the vision of Ezechiel, of the first centuries of the diaspora.

²²²*Conjectura Cabbalistica, sive Mentis Mosaicae in Tribus primis Capitibus Geneseos, secundum Triplicem Cabbalam viz. Litteralem, Philosophicam, Mysticam sive Divino-Moralem Interpretatio* (with a voluminous *Triplicis Cabbalae Defensio*).

²²³*Kabbala denudata*, vol. I, *Pars secunda*, pp. 293–307 = MORE, vol. II/1, pp. 523–528. Among the other texts by MORE included in the *Kabbala denudata*, we find his critical comments on rabbi I. LURIA'S *Sepher ha-D'rushim*. These comments are entitled *Quaestiones et Considerationes Paucae Brevesque in Tractatum Primum Libri Druschim, sive Introductionem Metaphysicam ad Cabbalam Genuinam, Authore R. I. Loriensi. Quibus accessit Ad Clarissimum & Eruditissimum Virum Chr. Knorrium ... Ulterior Disquisitio* (*Kabbala denudata*, vol. I, *Pars secunda*, text № 5 = MORE, vol. II/1, pp. 445–472).

²²⁴Cf. *Coniectura cabbalistica*, second part: *Cabbala philosophica*, cap. I, §§ 1–7; MORE, vol. II/2, pp. 478–479.

²²⁵MORE: *Quaestiones et Considerationes Paucae Brevesque in Tractatum Primum Libri Druschim*, critical remarks “*In Cap. II*”, § 4; MORE, vol. II/1, p. 449.

general, and was mentioned in that context by JACOBI in what is for us a critical passage of his account of his SPINOZA-conversations with LESSING (see below). Thus, despite the distance MORE took from early modern Jewish philosophical Cabbala, he could be, and really was, regarded by JACOBI as a representative of 'Cabbalisterey', i.e., Lurianic Cabbala (as distinguished from the 'Kibbel' i.e., Zoharic Cabbala).²²⁶

That MORE could cooperate on the *Kabbala denudata* was made possible by the Flemish mystic Franciscus Mercurius VAN HELMONT (VAN HELMONT *filius* or *junior*, 1614–1699). It was VAN HELMONT who, when staying in England, brought MORE into contact with VON ROSENROTH.²²⁷ VAN HELMONT, LEIBNIZ'S pen-partner, himself also assisted VON ROSENROTH in the work on the *Kabbala Denudata*, and became involuntarily involved in the conversion of MOSES GERMANUS to Judaism. The essential point for us, however, is that he wrote *The Order of the Ages* (*Seder Olam sive Ordo Saeculorum, Historica enarratio doctrinae*, anonymous edition, *sine loco*, 1693),²²⁸ on account of which he was also generally known as an accomplished Cabbalist.

On the basis of the philosophical content of that book, we shall suggest that VAN HELMONT, named by JACOBI in the passage of the *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza* in which he also named H. MORE, contributed as well, *viz.*, with the idea of *periodicity*, to the formation of LESSING'S idea of a cosmogonical pulsation of the cosmic divine being.

Further, we also suggest that the general acquaintance with the imaginative-visualizing idea of the *tsim-tsum* in the epoch is also due to WACHTER'S work, *Spinozism in Jewish Thought* (*Der Spinozismus im Jüdenthumb, Oder, die von dem heütigen Jüdenthumb, und dessen Geheimen Kabbala Vergötterte Welt*, Amsterdam, 1699; often cited by the two last words of the title, i.e., as *Vergötterte Welt*).²²⁹ WACHTER, in this early work of his, gives an account of his theological debate by correspondence with MOSES GERMANUS (i.e., J. P. SPEETH), an Augustinian monk converted to Judaism. By the documented presentation of the debated point, i.e., whether or not the Jewish theological thought of the age was influenced by the Spinozistic doctrine of the unicity of substance (and hence, by that of the immanence of God), WACHTER involuntarily contributed to the propagation of the concept of a "contraction of the Infinite One", "*Zusammenziehung des Unendlichen*",

²²⁶For JACOBI'S distinction between *Cabbalisterey* and *Kibbel*, see our footnote on the passage of his *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza* which we cite below.

²²⁷On this historical meeting of the three great Christian Cabbalists, which presumably took place in England, see SALECKER, pp. 38–41. See *ibid.* on van HELMONT'S relation to LEIBNIZ. Cf. also BENZ 1979, pp. 103–109.

²²⁸See bibliography for more details on van HELMONT'S *Seder Olam*. For some reason, the book often figures in modern bibliographies under the false title "*Seder Olam sive Ordo Saeculorum, Historica enarratio doctrinae per unum in quo sunt omnia*". In reality, the underlined words do not figure in the title-page of the book, nor elsewhere in the opening pages (we have consulted the online original copy of the Universitätsbibliothek Halle; see bibliography for internet address).

²²⁹Modern reprographical edition: SCHRÖDER 1994a.

as he cited evidence extensively from Latin epitomes, included in the *Kabbala denudata*, of rabbi LURIA'S *Sepher ha-D'rushim* and HERRERA'S *Puerta del Cielo*, especially in his refutation (“*Abfertigung*”) of MOSES GERMANUS'S second answer to him in their third debate (“*Unterredung*”) by correspondence.²³⁰

It is again doubtless that ÖTINGER further spread the originally Lurian idea of the *tsim-tsum* by extracting the *Mishnat Hasidim*, a Hebrew summary of the *Ets Hayyim* (i.e., “*Tree of life*”), which is essentially Hayyim VITAL'S redaction of LURIA'S speculative theological teachings.²³¹ Though ÖTINGER himself opted for a theory of cosmogonical *expansion* of God, still, he briefly commented on the “*contraction of God*” (“*Zimzum, d.i. Zusammenziehung Gottes*”; for more detail about this point, see Section 8 of Chapter 6, *ad in.*).²³²

The last major proposition of our thesis is that in his statement, presented by JACOBI, on the periodical contractions and expansions of God conceived as the universal soul, LESSING combined a specifically altered version of this early modern Jewish Cabbalistic theory with the Stoic (or perhaps Platonic) idea of the world soul, and thus constructed a hypothetical concept of ‘a personal godhead’ (“*eine persönliche Gottheit*”). Further, we shall argue that this concept of God may have some affinity also with Stoic cosmology (cf. the periodicity of the contractions of God) and physics (God conceived as an *animal rationale universale*), and that, nevertheless, it is embedded in a Christian theological or Christological context (cf. *Tod und Auferstehung* of God), whereby it may be seen as the result of a syncretic rather than systematic philosophy of God, or as the outcome of an idiosyncratic synthesis that may be qualified as ‘*esoterical rationalism.*’

²³⁰ Original page numbering pp. 78–106 = SCHRÖDER 1994a, pp. 142–172. On the philosophical importance of WACHTER'S book, cf. SCHRÖDER'S opinion: “*Sodann ist der Spinozismus im Jüdenthumb eines der einflußreichsten Bücher, die in den ersten hundert Jahren nach Erscheinen der Opera posthuma über Spinoza geschrieben worden sind. Sein dritter, separat paginierter Teil, «darinnen ... der Spinozismus widerleget wird», machte wesentliche Stücke des ersten Buchs der Ethica einem breiteren Publikum in deutscher Übersetzung zugänglich. Noch als der Pantheismusstreit zwischen Mendelssohn und Jacobi in den 1780er Jahren Spinoza ins Zentrum der philosophischen Diskussionen brachte, wurde Wachers These, daß der Spinozismus nicht aus der cartesischen, sondern aus der kabbalistischen Tradition herzuleiten ist, von den Kombattanten und den Teilnehmern an den Folgedebatten diskutiert.*” (*Ibid.*, p. 23.)

²³¹ On the complex (philological and philosophical) relation of Hayyim VITAL'S redaction to rabbi LURIA'S original (orally propounded) doctrines, see SCHOLEM 1978, sections on I. LURIA and H. VITAL respectively (in especial, pp. 424–425 and 445–447). SCHOLEM here says that VITAL put down LURIA'S teachings shortly after LURIA'S death, i.e., approximately between 1573 and 1576, under the general title *Ets Hayyim*. On the basis of VITAL'S redaction, M. POPPERS of Cracow then re-arranged and published LURIA'S teachings in Jerusalem at the end of the seventeenth century, in the three divisions *Derekh Ets Hayyim*, *Peri Ets Hayyim* and *Nof Ets Hayyim*. The first of these divisions has usually been referred to as ‘the printed book entitled *Ets Hayyim*’, says SCHOLEM.

²³² Cf. ÖTINGER: *Über die Lehrtafel der Prinzessin Antonia, (Gegenüberstellung hebräischer und zeitgenössischer Philosophie: Aus Ötingers Manuskript “Zur Verbesserung der Zinzendorffischen Ideen von der Dreyeinigkeit”)*, § 8: *Nähere Darstellung des Juden-Systems*; (roman characters by ÖTINGER; eds. BREYMAYER and HÄUSSERMANN, Teil 1, p. 133).

The historical circumstances in which LESSING, to believe JACOBI, made his only statement about God as the world soul are well known by JACOBI's account and have been extensively investigated. JACOBI tells us about them immediately in the introductory part of his *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza* Thus, we know from here, among other things, that he stayed for a good five days in LESSING's house in Wolfenbüttel, from the afternoon of 5–10 July 1780, and then again upon his return from Hamburg for some more days. So he personally met and philosophized with LESSING about half a year before LESSING's death. Of chief theological–metaphysical importance is their grand 7 July morning conversation, while it is impossible as well as futile to specify the exact time of the rest of their discussions. Further, it is well-known that the conversation (which notoriously was going to raise an embittered literary fight chiefly between JACOBI and MENDELSSOHN) revolved mainly around the proper interpretation of the Spinozan metaphysical system, in which both interlocutors were versed and highly interested. But it is a more recent interpretative achievement (for which research is in great part indebted to K. HAMMACHER) that LESSING's own theological position as reflected in JACOBI's report has philosophically not so much to do with *historical* Spinozism as with the theosophy of the new Cabbala, made available to the cultivated reader of the time by, among others, VON ROSENROTH, H. MORE, VAN HELMONT, WACHTER and ÖTINGER. AS HAMMACHER puts it on account of '*Lessings Spinozismus*':

*... we must clearly distinguish between Spinoza's own system, which is moulded in a firm conceptual order and in a system of purely philosophical arguments, and the religious, mostly Cabbalistically conceived writings, which, in the eighteenth century, had generally been seen and described as Spinozistic in tendency.*²³³

The rationale for HAMMACHER's interpretation is in the philosophical content of LESSING's speculations, which combine some fundamental metaphysical theses of historical Spinozism (like, e.g., the determinism of the will, extension and cogitation as non-exhaustive manifestations of God, etc.) with freely adapted, more imaginative than discursive-demonstrative Cabbalistic ideas of the creative nature of God. Thus, we find an almost purely Spinozan metaphysical proposition in what we may call LESSING's second theological statement as he says that:

*Extension, movement, and thought are obviously based on a higher power which they do not remotely exhaust. It must be infinitely superior to this or that effect; and so it may experience a kind of pleasure which not only transcends all concepts but lies completely beyond conceptuality.*²³⁴

²³³ "... (wir müssen) deutlich unterscheiden zwischen dem eigentlichen System Spinozas, das sich an der streng begrifflichen Ordnung und dem Zusammenhang rein philosophischer Argumentation herausarbeiten lässt, und den religiösen vorwiegend kabbalistisch bestimmten Schriften, die im 18. Jahrhundert allgemein als spinozistisch verstanden und ausgegeben wurden." (HAMMACHER 1982, p. 88. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) Cf. also how he makes the same distinction in a later article: "*Lessings Spinozismus ist keine direkte Übernahme des eigentlichen Systems Spinozas, sondern mehr eine Fortentwicklung bestimmter Gedanken Spinozas und noch mehr Wiederaufnahme von Gedanken, in deren Tradition stehend Spinoza erkannt wird.*" (HAMMACHER, 1985, p. 51.)

²³⁴ "*Ausdehnung, Bewegung, Gedanke, sind offenbar in einer höheren Kraft gegründet, die noch lange nicht damit erschöpft ist. Sie muß unendlich vortrefflicher seyn, als diese oder jene Wirkung; und so kann es auch eine Art des Genusses für sie geben, der nicht allein alle Begriffe übersteigt,*

That extension, motion and thought all have their common ontological ground in a higher power, which they alone are unable to exhaust, i.e., to represent or manifest in the full measure of its actual infinity, follows from a Spinozan metaphysical thesis (cf. *Ethica* I, proposition 11),²³⁵ albeit the term *Kracht*, as a category of genus that includes God, might derive from Leibnizian theology. When LESSING next rejects a “*personal extramundane divinity*” (“*persönliche extramundane Gottheit*”), whereby he implicitly drops the Leibnizian cosmological argument for the existence of God, as well as admits an immanent efficient cause of the intelligible and physical nature, he again speaks truly Spinozan metaphysics.²³⁶ But these historically truly Spinozan ideas are recurringly completed in his statements by a conception of the creative expansions and contractions of the universal divinity, his intriguing $\epsilon\nu\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu$. When LESSING first mentions this idea, he attributes it to LEIBNIZ because, at this point of the conversation, he attempts to prove that even LEIBNIZ was a ‘Spinozist’. The *nervus probandi* of his ‘proof’ is a reference to the alleged Spinozistic theory of *tsim-tsum*:

I: *But you said that Leibniz was at heart devoted to a certain philosophical position, Spinozism. Lessing: Do you remember that passage in Leibniz where he says of God that he is in a perpetual state of expansion and contraction? which is the creation and continued existence of the world.*²³⁷

The doctrine of the creative expansion and contraction of God, advanced here by LESSING as a characteristically Spinozan idea in virtue of which to prove LEIBNIZ'S Spinozistic tendencies, has nothing to do with historical Spinozism as we know it from all the philosophical texts authentically written by SPINOZA himself. In fact, LESSING here associates with the name of SPINOZA late Cabbalistic conceptions, about which SPINOZA may indeed have been informed

sondern völlig außer dem Begriffe liegt.” (JACOBI'S first letter to MENDELSSOHN, of 4 November 1783, as cited in the *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza ...*; GA, *Werke*, vol. 1/1, p. 22. Transl. by H. B. NISBET ed., p. 247; highlighting by JACOBI.) When we talk about ‘LESSING'S second theological statement’, we suggest that he made a *first* theological statement in the familiar proposition “*Die orthodoxen Begriffe von der Gottheit sind nicht mehr für mich etc.*” (*Ibid.*, p. 16.)

²³⁵“*Deus, sive substantia constans infinitis attributis, quorum unumquodque aeternam, & infinitam essentiam exprimit, necessario existit.*”

²³⁶*Ibid.*, p. 23.

²³⁷“*Ich. (scil. JACOBI) ... Sie aber sagten von einer gewissen Meynung, dem Spinozismus, daß Leibniz derselben im Herzen zugethan gewesen. Leßing. Erinnern sie sich einer Stelle des Leibnitz, wo von Gott gesagt ist: derselbe befände sich in einer immerwährenden Expansion und Kontraktion: dieses wäre die Schöpfung und das Bestehen der Welt?*” (*Ibid.* Transl. by G. VALLÉE et al., roman characters by JACOBI.) Reflecting on this passage of JACOBI'S account, HERDER also remarks in *Gott* (1787) that the ‘contraction and expansion of God’ is a Cabbalistic idea. In the *Viertes Gespräch* of HERDER'S work, Philolaus says the following: “*Wer weiß also auch, welchem Kabbalisten er (scil. LEIBNIZ) sich eben damals bequemen wollte, als er, wie Lessing anführt, von Gott sagte: »derselbe befände sich in einer immerwährenden Expansion und Contraction; dies sei die Schöpfung und das Bestehen der Welt.«*” (In SUPHAN ed., Bd. XVI, p. 506.)

by his rabbi, Saul MORTEIRA, in the Talmudic school of Amsterdam.²³⁸ Indeed, says SCHOLEM, SPINOZA, before his excommunication, could have access to a Spanish manuscript copy of HERRERA's *Puerta del Cielo* (one such copy has been conserved in Amsterdam up to our day) or, thereafter, he could consult ABOAB's Hebrew translation of it (publ. Amsterdam, 1655).²³⁹ We may add that he quite certainly possessed in his personal library a redaction of rabbi I. LURIA's teachings in S. DELMEDIGO's edition.²⁴⁰ As far as the *philosophical* verisimilitude of a Cabbalistic influence on SPINOZA is concerned, there is a degree of consent among experts that, at least as concerns the doctrine of the unicity of

²³⁸ Cf. in this respect G. SCHOLEM's opinion that "*Die Vermutung Dunin-Borkowskis, daß Menasse ben Israel und Saul Morteira, einer der Lehrer Spinozas, die Himmelsporte im Spanischen Manuskript gelesen haben, ist zwar unbewiesen, aber durchaus plausibel.*" (SCHOLEM ed., 1974, p. 26; roman characters by SCHOLEM.) DUNIN-BORKOWSKI (see bibliography) writes in chapter three ("*Auf dem Weg zum Rabbinat*"), section two ("*Kabbalistische Wanderfahrten*"), point one, of his monography on the young SPINOZA that "*Der spanische Ursprung der Kabbala kam hier (scil. among the Israelites of Amsterdam) in sein Recht. Man las eifrig die ältesten kabbalistischen Werke und die klassischen Kommentare. Selbst die Modernsten standen in unverdientem Ansehen. Der Ruf des erst 1639 (SCHOLEM, an auctoritas maior, says 1635) verstorbenen Abraham de Herrera (Errera, Irira) ging noch von Mund zu Mund ... Manasse ben Israel und Saul Morteira lasen Herreras kabbalistische 'Himmelsporte' und waren überzeugte Gläubige. In der Bücherei der portugiesisch-israelitischen Gemeinde zu Amsterdam finden sich jetzt (scil. 1910) noch mehrere Abschriften des spanischen Originals.*" (P. 169.) More recent research is, however, less assertive about whether SPINOZA attended the *Talmud Tora* school of Amsterdam at all, as his name is missing from a 1651 list of the pupils of that school (cf. doc. № 61 in FREUDENTHAL 2006, vol. 1, pp. 241–242, and its commentary in vol. 2, pp. 129–130). But as the commentary on that list points out, SPINOZA may have received private education; and in any case, rabbi MORTEIRA must have been a generally known personality in the Sephardic Jewish community of Amsterdam. Both Portuguese and Spanish were in daily use among members of that community (cf., e.g., documents № 58–63 in FREUDENTHAL 2006, vol. 1), so the objective possibility no doubt exists that SPINOZA may have read HERRERA's text in the original.

²³⁹ Cf. SCHOLEM ed., pp. 41–47; many important references to DUNIN-BORKOWSKI, pp. 188–189 (III/2, point two: "*Die Tiefen der Kabbala und Despinozas Ahnungen*"). MIGNINI supports SCHOLEM's idea as MIGNINI says that "*Un'opera che, tra le altre (...), il giovane Spinoza ha verosimilmente conosciuto, per l'ampia diffusione e il favore che godeva nella stessa comunità giudaico-portoghese, è La Puerta del Cielo di A. Herrera, tradotta anche in ebraico e in latino.*" (MIGNINI ed., p. 376; roman characters by MIGNINI.) On the other hand, W. SCHRÖDER is sceptical on this point as he asserts that "*So fehlt jeder Anhaltspunkt dafür, daß Spinoza den (1655 in einer hebräischen Übersetzung veröffentlichten) Text überhaupt gelesen hat, wie bisweilen behauptet wird ...*" (SCHRÖDER 1987, p. 90, n. 323, *ad fin.*)

²⁴⁰ Cf. (№ 56): "*Joseph del medico abscondita sapientiae*" in the list of SPINOZA's private books, set down at the moment of his death (see doc. № 151 in FREUDENTHAL 2006, vol. 1, pp. 342–358). Joseph Salomo DELMEDIGO (1591–1655) published rabbi LURIA's Hebrew teachings, as developed by rabbi I. SARUG, in two volumes, allegedly in Basel, really in Frankfurt am Main, in 1629 and 1631, respectively (*Ta'alamoth Hokhma: 'Depths of wisdom'*, and *Now'loth Hokhma: 'Splinters of wisdom'*; cf. SCHOLEM ed., 1974, pp. 22–23 and 45 and SCHOLEM 1978, pp. 425–426). SCHOLEM points out that though the impact of SARUG's interpretation of the Lurianic theological doctrines was immense (especially in Europe), still it cannot be regarded as authentic and true to LURIA's original conceptions.

substance, and that of its numerically and intensively infinite attributes, HERRERA and SPINOZA do stand on a common metaphysical platform.²⁴¹ Yet, this historically detectable philosophical affinity between early modern Jewish Cabbala and Spinozism certainly does not extend to the concept of a *contractio Dei*, or *tsim-tsum*. If SPINOZA was really acquainted with this idea, then he probably rejected it as one deriving from our faculty of *imaginatio*, i.e., as irrational and false. Further, not even WACHTER attributed the doctrine of the contraction of God to SPINOZA, though he, in *Der Spinozismus im Judenthumb*, really went to great lengths in order philosophically to associate historical Spinozism with early modern Jewish Cabbala.²⁴² Hence, the philosophical link LESSING establishes between the theory of *tsim-tsum* and the metaphysical system of Spinozism does not seem to have any historical validity, while his suggestion that LEIBNIZ taught ‘an everlasting expansion and contraction of God’ (*‘eine immerwährende Expansion und Kontraktion Gottes’*) is perhaps even less endorsed by the historiography of philosophy.²⁴³ We may anticipate already here that what LESSING understood by ‘Spinozism’ appears to be an idiosyncratic blend of philosophical Cabbala and historical Spinozism.

In the context of our investigation, we are concerned, first and foremost, with JACOBI'S account of LESSING'S statement about God conceived as the *universal soul*. This is inserted into the text of *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza* after the report on their discussion about Spinozism taken in a more strict sense, immediately after a section in which JACOBI suspects LESSING of ‘*Cabbalisterey*’. It is important to see that in this manner even JACOBI embeds LESSING'S statement concerning the world soul into a Cabbalistic conceptual context:

Lessing once said with the trace of a smile that perhaps he himself was the Highest Being, present in the state of extreme contraction. I pleaded for my life. He answered that I had nothing to worry about and explained his thoughts in a way that reminded me of Henry More and F. Mercurius van Helmont. He became even more explicit, to the point that, if pressed, I could well accuse him yet again of indulging in Cabbala. That gave him no small pleasure; that is why I seized the opportunity to speak for the kibbel, or

²⁴¹ SCHOLEM cites DUNIN-BORKOWSKI agreeingly in this respect: “*Mit Recht faßt Dunin-Borkowski Herreras unerschrockene Folgerungen aus seinen Grundlagen zusammen: »Es kann nach ihm nicht zwei Substanzen von gleichen Attributen geben; es existiert demnach streng genommen (Herrera spricht nicht immer consequent) nur eine Substanz mit unendlichen Eigenschaften; sie determiniert sich zu vielen und endlichen Wesenheiten, welche aber nur ihre Modifikationen sind. ... Wollte man die spinozistische Spekulation in ihren anfänglichen Grundlagen skizzieren, so brauchte man nur diese theorien Herreras auszusprechen.«*” (SCHOLEM ed., 1974, pp. 42–43; reference to DUNIN-BORKOWSKI, p. 189; roman characters by DUNIN-BORKOWSKI.)

²⁴² WACHTER (as the chronologically first person to do this) systematically translates into German, and abundantly comments on, definitions I–VIII, axioms I–VII, and propositions I–XVIII of book one of the *Ethica*, in the *Dritter Theil* (“*Darinnen die Vergötterung der Welt An B. de Spinoza widerlegt wird*”, page numbers start over again from 1 !) of *Der Spinozismus im Judenthumb* (1699).

²⁴³ See contemporary reactions to LESSING'S suggestion in KL. HAMMACHER'S and I.-M. PISKE'S commentary on JACOBI'S *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza* in GA, *Werke*, Band I/2: *Anhang*, p. 403.

Cabbala, in the strictest sense²⁴⁴ and from the following point of view: that in and of itself it is impossible to construct the infinite on the basis of a given finite, and then to grasp and somehow to formulate their mutual interrelationship. It follows that any statement on that topic has to ensue from revelation. Lessing was adamant, insisting that everything be seen in terms of the natural; I, for my part, asserted that there can be no natural philosophy of the supernatural and yet the two (the natural and the supernatural) are obviously givens.

When Lessing wanted to imagine a personal divinity, he thought of it as the soul of the universe, and he thought of the Whole as being analogous to an organic body. The universal soul, therefore, qua soul, would be nothing but effect, as are all other souls in any conceivable system.²⁴⁵ But the organic extension of the soul could not be thought of as analogous to the organic parts of that extension inasmuch as there could be nothing outside it to which it could refer, nothing from which it could take anything and nothing to which it could give anything back. Therefore, in order to continue to exist at all, it would have to retire, so to speak, into itself from time to time; it would have to unite within itself life, death, and resurrection. But of course one might variously imagine the inner economy of such a being.

Lessing was fascinated by that idea and applied it to all kinds of cases both seriously and in jest.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴Cf. HAMMACHER'S and PISKE'S explanation on JACOBI'S expressions: "Als Cabbalisterey bezeichnet J. die neuere, von der neuplatonischen Philosophie inspirierte, sog. Lurianische Kabbala ... im Unterschied zu der alten jüdischen ..." (GA, Werke, vol. I/2: Anhang, p. 413.) In respect of the historical origin of the differentiation between *Cabbalisterey* from *Kibbel*, HAMMACHER and PISKE refer us to BUDDE'S *Defensio Cabbalae Ebraeorum* ..., where in § IX BUDDE emphasizes the philosophical difference between *vetus Cabbala* and *recentior Cabbala* (cf. (BUDDE) 1700a, pp. 221–223).

²⁴⁵In the first edition, JACOBI inserted the following footnote here: "Auch nach dem System des Leibnitz. – Die Entelechie wird durch den Körper (oder den Begriff des Körpers) erst zum Geiste." The footnote, together with the commented passage in the main text, raised the criticism of MENDELSSOHN (*Erinnerungen an Herrn Jacobi*, 1 August 1784; GA, Werke, vol. I/1, p. 179) and HERDER (*Gott. Einige Gespräche*/IV, 1787; SUPHAN ed., vol. XVI, p. 526), respectively. JACOBI countered MENDELSSOHN'S charges in his 21 April 1785 letter to him (also published in the first edition of *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza*; GA, Werke, vol. 1/1, pp. 113–115), and very considerably extended the inculpatory footnote in the second (1789) and third (1819) editions of his book, referring the readers also to his *David Hume über den Glauben* (1787; GA, Werke, vol. 2/1, pp. 72–80). In his defence, JACOBI first calls attention to the fact that the footnote remark about LEIBNIZ is his own addition, and not a statement of LESSING. Philosophically, he points out that according to the Leibnizian doctrine of substance, a created soul or spirit is necessarily the perfection of the particular body it informs as a substantial form. Since the soul thus depends on, is ontologically correlated with, its body, it may, in the measure of its ontological dependence, be regarded as an 'effect' of its body. JACOBI buttresses this interpretation with, among other things, a reference to § 124 of the *Essais de Théodicée*, where LEIBNIZ contends that "... dans ma Philosophie il n'y a point de Creature raisonnable sans quelque corps organique, et ... il n'y a point d'esprit créé qui soit entièrement détaché de la matiere." (Cf. JACOBI'S 21 April 1785 letter to MENDELSSOHN in GA, *Briefwechsel*, vol. 1/4, p. 85, and *David Hume über den Glauben* in GA, Werke, vol. 2/1, p. 73. French text cited from GERHARDT ed., 1965, vol. VI, p. 179.)

²⁴⁶"Einmal sagte Lessing, mit halbem Lächeln: Er selbst wäre vielleicht das höchste Wesen, und gegenwärtig in dem Zustande der äussersten Contraction. – Ich bat um meine Existenz. – Er antwortete, es wäre nicht allerdings so gemeint, und erklärte sich auf eine Weise, die mich an Heinrich Morus und von Helmont erinnerte. Leßing erklärte sich noch deutlicher; doch so, daß ich ihn abermals, zur Noth, der Cabbalisterey verdächtig machen konnte. Dieß ergötzte ihn nicht

In the first paragraph of this notable passage, we find LESSING'S second (this time jocular) reference to the Cabbalistic theory of the contraction of God (*tsim-tsum*), while he makes his only statement concerning God as the universal soul in the second paragraph. In these paragraphs, however, we notice not only the philosophical affinities between the respectively Zoharic or, later, philosophical Cabbalistic concepts of the (expansion and) contraction of God on the one hand, and LESSING'S idiosyncratic ideas of the same, on the other, but also some essential differences between them. Generally speaking, the major philosophical propositions that are equally present in a number of Jewish Cabbalistic sources and in LESSING'S statement, concern, first, the periodical contractions and expansions of God, and, second, the (differently conceived) intramundaneity of God. In Cabbala, a specifically restricted intramundaneity of God may derive from the fundamental metaphysical thesis of, e.g., LURIA, that the material universe is topologically situated in the middle of the extended spiritual substance of God. Such a theory, however, is perhaps better designated by the term 'intradivinity of the world'. On the other hand, the Lessingian concept of the intramundaneity of God seems to be exempt from the element of transcendence, which is, as a rule, maintained within the Jewish mystical tradition, despite its pantheistic inclination.

Hence, the first important philosophical *difference* between the Cabbala and LESSING'S statement is that the *Zohar* as well as the newer Cabbala, while they do

wenig, und ich nahm daher Gelegenheit für das Kibbel, oder die Cabbalam im **eigentlichsten Sinne, aus dem Gesichtspunkte** zu reden: daß es an und für sich selbst unmöglich sey, das Unendliche aus dem Endlichen zu entwickeln, und den Uebergang des einen zu dem andern, oder ihre Proportion, durch irgend eine Formel heraus zu bringen; folglich, wenn man etwas darüber sagen wollte, so müßte man aus Offenbarung reden. Leßing blieb dabey: daß er sich alles »**natürlich ausgebeten haben wollte**«; « und ich: daß es keine natürliche Philosophie des Uebernatürlichen geben könnte, und doch beydes (Natürliches und Uebernatürliches) offenbar vorhanden wäre. – Wenn sich Lessing eine persönliche Gottheit vorstellen wollte, so dachte er sie als die Seele des Alls; und das Ganze, nach der Analogie eines organischen Körpers. Diese Seele des Ganzen wäre also, wie es alle andre Seelen, nach allen möglichen Systemen sind, **als Seele**, nur Effekt. Der organische Umfang derselben könnte aber nach der Analogie der organischen **Theile** dieses Umfanges in so ferne nicht gedacht werden, als er sich auf nichts, das ausser ihm vorhanden wäre, beziehen, von ihm nehmen und ihm wiedergeben könnte. Also, um sich im Leben zu erhalten, müßte er; von Zeit zu Zeit, sich in sich selbst gewissermassen zurückziehen; Tod und Auferstehung, mit dem Leben, in sich vereinigen. Man könnte sich aber von der inneren Oekonomie eines solchen Wesens mancherley Vorstellungen machen. Leßing hieng sehr an dieser Idee, und wendete sie, bald im Scherze, bald im Ernst, auf allerley Fälle an.” (JACOBI: *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza*; GA, Werke, vol. 1/1, pp. 31–34. Transl. by G. VALLÉE et al., pp. 97–98, bold characters by JACOBI.) JACOBI cites LESSING'S incriminated statement about God as the world soul again in his 21 April 1785 response to MENDELSSOHN: “In meinem Briefe steht: Leßing habe von der Weltseele gesagt: Angenommen, daß sie wäre, so könne sie, wie alle andre Seelen, nach allen möglichen Systemen, **als Seele**, nur Effect seyn.” (*Ibid.*, p. 113; underlining added.) In this formulation, the whole statement no longer links philosophically the concept of the *Weltseele* to that of God. The underlined parts emphasize the hypothetical modality of LESSING'S proposition. JACOBI returns to LESSING'S statement concerning the *Weltseele* also in his 30 June 1784 (GA *Briefwechsel* № 1052) letter to HERDER, on which see the following Section 1 of Chapter 8.

propound an *emanationist*, i.e., non-creationist doctrine of the coming-into-being of the spiritual and material universe (as well as a theory of *creation*), they invariably emphasize the absolute (real and ideal) transcendence of God as the *En-Soph*.²⁴⁷ Although there really has been a pantheistic tendency in Jewish mystical tradition, a constant mental and dialectical effort has also been made to maintain the theistic concept of God as *causa (omnium) causarum* or, better, as *causa supercausalis*.²⁴⁸ Second, Jewish Cabbala, in the sources investigated in the present study, never describes God as the *universal soul*,²⁴⁹ never sees God as (part of) the cosmic being LESSING envisages in the above citation, and never conceives of the periodical destruction and reconstruction of the universe as the 'death and resurrection of God'. Conversely, we never find LESSING theorizing about the *Adam Kadmon* ('primordial man') or the *Sephiroth*, albeit these belong among the most fundamental distinctive concepts of the Cabbala. In spite of all these differences, it remains entirely reasonable (by virtue of the concept of the *periodical contractions and expansions of God*) to work out the Cabbalistic conceptual background of LESSING'S statement about God conceived as the universal soul because, as we shall see, the philosophical concord between the Cabbala and LESSING is really far-reaching on this particular point.

For a detailed demonstration of this thesis, let us begin with the beginning, i.e., the *B^ereshith* (Hebr. "in the beginning"),²⁵⁰ which, being a 130-page-long commentary on *Genesis* I: 1-VI:7, is the first book of the *Zohar* (apart from its introduction, the *Haqdamat*). We have picked out precisely this part of the approximately 2000-page-long main text of the *Zohar* because it is a threefold

²⁴⁷When we use the term *En-soph* (Hebr. "without-bound") to denote God conceived as *really* or ontologically transcendent, we refer to the Cabbalistic concept of the infinitely perfect 'boundless one', of the divine essence which as it were 'more-than-exists' in a region beyond existence. When, with the term *En-Soph*, we denote God conceived as *ideally* or epistemologically transcendent, we refer to the Cabbalistic concept of God's absolute *inconceivability*, because God, according to the Cabbala, inhabits a region which is fully beyond the reach of human capacities to know. The Neo-platonic (Plotinian-Proclean) and Christian mystic (Pseudo-Dionysian) inspiration of these ideas is sometimes evident in the *Zohar*.

²⁴⁸On the dialectically opposed tendencies of pantheism and theism within Jewish mystical theology, see SCHOLEM 1971, pp. 252 (on account of M. CORDOVERO) and 262 (on account of I. LURIA).

²⁴⁹As Dr. Irmgard-Maria PISKE (now Dr. HUTMACHER) has pointed out (GA, *Werke*, vol. 1/2, p. 414), the concept of a "universal soul" *does* appear in one passage of HERRERA'S *Porta coelorum* (II/2, § 3; actually, also in §§ 5–6). In the Spanish manuscript, this is in book four, chapter two (pp. 36 *verso*–37 *recto*). This passage is, however, a paraphrase from PLOTINUS, and the terms "*alma del mundo*", "*anima universal*" etc. here refer to the very specifically determined Plotinian concept of the third hypostase, Soul, not directly identical in the Plotinian system with the "soul of the world", *ψυχή τοῦ κόσμου*, which is the precise equivalent of the *Weltseele*. See on this more below, when we treat HERRERA'S philosophy.

²⁵⁰*B^ereshith* is also the first word, and the Hebrew designation, of the first book of the *Pentateuch*.

mystical commentary on the Biblical account of creation,²⁵¹ and, as such, it is the first major, if semi-mythical or proto-philosophical, presentation of a theory of the cosmological expansion of God within the tradition of Jewish Cabbala.²⁵² It is almost needless to say that it has been impossible to carry out a fuller analysis of the other, related parts of the *Zohar* within the frame of the present study. Still, we do need a brief introduction to the source from which the idea, although not the term, of the *tsim-tsum*, so important for the mature LESSING, apparently derives.

This source, in LESSING'S time, was also available in itself (i.e., not only through the respective interpretative systems of LURIA and HERRERA), even in the original – the Hebrew and Aramaic text²⁵³ of the *Zohar* had been published several times during early modernity. Experts agree that the best classical edition is the *editio princeps* of Mantova, 1588–1560 (*Sepher ha-Zohar*), from which we will cite only some of the key technical terms.²⁵⁴ As a rule however, our citations will come from Daniel C. MATT'S extensively commented English translation, which is based on the original text critically re-established from the manuscript sources.²⁵⁵

²⁵¹Cf. M.-R. HAYOUN'S authoritative remark on the importance of the Zoharic *B'reshith* with respect to the theory of creation and / or emanation. HAYOUN says that “*les folios censés commenter la création de l'univers*” are I:15a–59a (= the *B'reshith*), which include two lengthy sections (22a–29a and 38a–45b) that are not original but somewhat later additions (HAYOUN, p. 220). The *B'reshith* is a *threefold* or *treble* commentary on the Biblical account of creation in that it comments on the same (introductory) chapters of *Genesis* three times, in three consecutive sections.

²⁵²For a more broadly conceived historical derivation of the concept of *tsim-tsum* within the Jewish tradition, as well as outside it (in Hellenistic Gnosticism), see the masterly presentation of SCHOLEM 1971, pp. 260–264. A conceptually-philosophically oriented, very lucid description and analysis of the concept of the *tsim-tsum* and the related doctrines (especially of the Lurianic Cabbala) is offered by MESSIS (see bibliography), *Zweites Heft*, chapters XII–XIII, pp. 44–56. MESSIS'S classical analysis has not become obsolete, despite its date of publication (1863).

²⁵³When we say the “Hebrew and Aramaic original text of the *Zohar*”, we mean that the very numerous citations from the *Tanach* (the Hebrew canon of the Old Testament) are in Hebrew in it, while the commentary itself is in an artificially “*concocted*” Aramaic (cf. MATT ed., p. XVIII).

²⁵⁴A copy of the Mantova edition is readable online at <http://www.jnul.huji.ac.il/dl/books/html/bk1073457.htm> (Jewish National and University Library, Digitized Book Repository, Jerusalem), with the *DjVu viewer plug-in*, freely downloadable from the same site. The entire, emended and critically re-established, original Hebrew and Aramaic text of the *B'reshith* has been made available also online at <http://www.sup.org/zohar/> as part of the prestigious “*Zohar Education Project*” of Stanford University. (Both sites were last viewed by me in 2007.)

²⁵⁵“*The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*” (see MATT in bibliography). An earlier, by far not negligible, heroic undertaking was the five-volume English translation of SIMON et al. (see bibliography). The translation of SIMON et al. reflects the text of the Mantova edition, and its advantage is that its English reads more easily. On the other hand, however, it mostly lacks explanatory material and is not totally complete. Further, SCHOLEM and MATT agree in saying that it “*often misunderstands the text*”, and that it is “*more a paraphrase than a translation*” (cf. MATT ed., p. XIX).

It is perhaps worth mentioning here that the Hebrew and Aramaic text (entitled *Liber Sohar Sive Collectanea De dictis et gestis R. Schimeon ...*) of the *Zohar* was published, partly as a work of KNORR VON ROSENROTH, also in Sulzbach, 1684, i.e., in the year in which the second volume of the *Kabbala denudata* left the same press.²⁵⁶

An unpublished Latin translation of the main text of the *Zohar* had been prepared in the middle of the sixteenth century by Guillaume POSTEL in France.²⁵⁷ It seems that the only Latin translation to have been *published* in early modern times was restricted to the parts of the Zoharic corpus included in the *Kabbala denudata* (*Sifra di-Ts^eniuta, Idra Rabba, Idra Zuta*), while the main exegetical textual body of the *Zohar*, the '*Zohar on the Torah*' never saw the light in Latin.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁶This monumental and extremely careful edition carried as a full title "*Liber Sohar Sive Collectanea De dictis et gestis R. Schimeon Filii Jochai, Doctoris Tannaei, s. Mischnaici, & Discipulorum ejus, aliorumque coetaneorum, qui ante & post excidium Hierosolymitanum in Palaestina floruerunt. Secundum ordinem Sectionum Pentateuchi in Commentarii mystici & Cabbalistici formam digesta. Quibus intermixti sunt Tractatus varii antiquissimi ... In quibus omnibus continetur Fundamentum totius Cabbalae unicum, i.e. Doctrina De Deo, De Personis in Divinitate, De Nominibus divinis; De quatuor mundis, seu rerum omnium systematibus; De anima, ejusque gradibus; De Angelis bonis & malis; De Messia ... Opus quod Corpus Cabbalae dici posset ... impressumque Sultzbaci, Typis M. Bloch, opera J. Holst, anno MDCLXXXIV.*" (Title page and some pages of the Aramaic text are accessible online at <http://vd17.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/pict/2002/3:021977R/>.) This edition included much more than the main text of the *Zohar*. Some twenty other classic Cabbalistic texts found place in it, while the text of the *Zohar* itself was emended by means of, among others, the relevant works of two major authors of early modern Jewish Cabbala, Moses CORDOVERO and I. LURIA, respectively (cf. dedicatory epistle to prince CHRISTIAN AUGUST, p. 3). From the perspective of this 1684 edition of the original text of the *Zohar*, KNORR VON ROSENROTH's *Kabbala denudata* appears to have been intended as an interpretative tool for (i.e., to facilitate the reading and understanding of) precisely this edition of the Zoharic text, since many of the sources translated or commented in the *Kabbala denudata* were subsequently published in the original language in the *Liber Sohar*. This intention is also made clear by the brief foreword to the reader, of the *Liber Sohar*.

²⁵⁷SCHOLEM asserts that "... the renowned Frenchman Guillaume Postel (1510–1581), one of the outstanding personalities of the Renaissance ... translated the *Zohar* and the *Sefer Yezirah* into Latin even before they had been printed in the original, and accompanied his translations with a lengthy theosophic exposition of his own views." (SCHOLEM 1978, pp. 199.) POSTEL's translation of the *Zohar*, however, remained in manuscript, while his translation of the *Sepher Yetsira* (entitled *Abrahami patriarchae liber Jezirah, sive formationis mundi ...*) was published in Paris 1552. On the history of Christian Cabbala in general, see SCHOLEM 1978, pp. 196–201; and BENZ 1979, pp. 95–99. The relevant part of J. FR. BUDDE's *Introductio ad historiam philosophiae Ebraeorum* (1702) is still very instructive (pp. 179–264: § XXXIV/z: PICO della Mirandola, with the full text of the 71 *Conclusiones cabalisticae*; § XXXIV/a: Joh. REUCHLIN; XXXV/b: H. MORE; XXXV/c: von ROSENROTH; XXXVI/c: COMENIUS; XXXVI/d: Joh. BAYER and others; see bibliography under BUDDE 1702).

²⁵⁸Cf. MATT, pp. 464–465 for a complete bibliographical list of the translations of the *Zohar* into Hebrew, English, French, German and Latin.

The *Zohar* (1280–1286), attributable in great part to the eighth-century Jewish mystic MOSES DE LEON,²⁵⁹ has a philosophically very particular account of the first emanation of all existence from the primordial, supra-essential source of being. This account is particular, in a formal respect, in that it is not presented as a unified unbroken discourse, but in the form of occasional digressions and unsystematic developments, which, even in the relatively short section *B^rreshith*, do not form a terminologically consistent, philosophically coherent theory of emanation. But such a theory is nevertheless clearly present in the text, albeit it is deployed in a discourse which is pre- or proto-philosophical (sometimes even imaginative-visualising) in character, rather than conceptual-argumentative.

Philosophically, the *Zohar* contends that the supra-essential, absolutely transcendent and unconceivable nucleus of God, the perfectly infinite and infinitely perfect source of being, is first in the impenetrable recesses of the *En-Soph*, אֵין סוֹף.²⁶⁰ In the terminology of the *Zohar*, this condition of the divinity is referred to as the first *Sephira*, which is *Keter* (“crown ⟨of God⟩”). By a process completely unknowable for us, the mysterious and inexhaustible divine essence manifests itself in what the *Zohar* calls the first mystic, primordial point (קַדְמָאָה בְּקוּדָא, *n^ekuda qad^ema^a*). This is the second *Sephira*, *Hokhmah*, “Wisdom ⟨of God⟩”,²⁶¹ which is metaphorically described as a blinding brilliancy (נְהוֹרָה, *n^ehor*). During this process, the divine essence preserves the full measure of its transcendence. Next, the first mystic point gradually expands or extends its spiritual substance so as to constitute, as it were, a ‘palace’. This is, then, identified with the understanding of God (*Binah*), the third *Sephira*. The first emanation of God is thus thought to be followed by a series of expansions of spiritual substance establishing ontological transitions between God as the absolutely infinite *En-Soph* and the last, tenth degree of the *Sephiroth*, the presence or abiding (*Shekhinah*) of God, through the gradual effusion or emanation of primordial divine light or radiance. In principle, the whole process is conceived, in a first instance, as taking place in the spiritual substance of the Godhead, in which the three higher grades are asserted to be completely inaccessible to

²⁵⁹For a general historical and philosophical introduction to the *Zohar*, cf. SCHOLEM’s magnificent *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (1971, pp. 156–204; see more details in bibliography). Another fundamental and authoritative book on the *Zohar* is I. TISHBY’s *The Wisdom of the Zohar* (see bibliography), which is also an anthology of extensively and incisively commented selections from the *Zohar*. See further SCHOLEM 1978, pp. 57–61; and HAYOUN 1999, *passim*. The absolutely indispensable bibliographical guide to historical research into the philosophical Cabbala, with a separate section on the *Zohar*, is SCHOLEM’s *Bibliographia Kabbalistica* (Leipzig 1927; see bibliography under SCHOLEM 1927). An early eighteenth-century *status quaestionis* on the philosophical and philosophical aspects of the *Zohar* is offered by BUDDE 1702, pp. 107–114.

²⁶⁰For a brilliant philosophical analysis of the concept of *En-Soph*, see TISHBY, pp. 232–235.

²⁶¹The ‘first or primordial mystic point’ is also referred to as the *reshith* (the “beginning”).

human understanding. The *Zohar* summarizes this process metaphorically but lucidly in folio I:20a of the Mantova *editio princeps* with the following terms:

The blessed Holy One had to create (למברי) everything in the world, arraying the world. All consists of a kernel within, with several shells covering the kernel. The entire world (עולם) is like this, above and below, from the head of the mystery (רזא) of the primordial point (דנקודה עלאה) to the end of all rungs: all is this within that, that within this, so that one is the shell of another, which itself is the shell of another.

The primordial point (נקודה קדמאה) is inner radiance (נהירו) – there is no way to measure its translucency, tenuity, or purity until an expanse expanded (ראתפשט פשיטו) from it. The expansion of that point became a palace, in which the point was clothed – a radiance unknowable, so intense its lucency. This palace, a garment for that concealed point, is a radiance beyond measure, yet not as gossamer or translucent as the primordial point, hidden and treasured. That palace expanded an expanse: primordial light. That expansion of primordial light is a garment for the palace, which is a gossamer, translucent radiance, deeper within. From here on, this expands into this, this is clothed in this, so that this is garment for this, and this for this. This, the kernel; this, the shell. Although the garment, it becomes the kernel of another layer.²⁶²

Thus represented, the coming-into-being of the spiritual universe is a series of extensions (פשיטו, *p^eshita*, ‘extending’) in which the higher grades of emanation tone down, as it were, the unbearably brilliant primordial light (נהירו, *nahiru*, ‘enlightening’) of the source of being, to make it benign for universal existence. The supernal or celestial universe of emanation then gives existence to, and ontologically maintains, the world below, the corporeal-material universe of ‘creation’. As far as the theology of creation is concerned, the text of the *B^ereshith* leaves it ultimately undecided precisely how the visible world came to be, though the author occasionally uses the Aramaic technical term for ‘*creatio ex nihilo*’, ברא, *b^era* (‘to create’), like in the first line of our citation above.²⁶³

While we do find here the crucial concept (for LESSING and us) of ‘expansion, extension (פשיטו, *p^eshita*)’ applied to God’s emanating-creative activity, it must be

²⁶² MATT ed., vol. I, pp. 151–152.

²⁶³ On the reluctance of the *Zohar* philosophically to specify whether this visible world came to be by emanation or by creation, cf. HAYOUN’S opinion who says that in the *Zohar*, “*L’univers du divin n’est pas radicalement séparé de celui du créé, qui lui ressemble et n’en est, en réalité, qu’un pâle reflet. Les préoccupations de Moïse de Léon et des autres auteurs du Zohar visaient par-dessus tout à maintenir une sorte d’harmonie originelle qui subsisterait, même après le processus d’émanation ou de création, dans l’univers séfirotique.* (p. 219) ... *Au lieu d’opter, à l’instar des philosophes, pour une coupure radicale entre les instances de la création et celles du créé, les auteurs du Zohar déploierent des trésors d’ingéniosité exégétique afin de préserver une sorte de profonde unité de l’être: essence divine, essence extra-divine, univers séfirotique, univers des quatre éléments, ces entités – antinomiques au gré des philosophes néo-aristotéliens – doivent rester liées dans l’âme du kabbaliste qui n’y voit qu’un passage, qu’une transition d’un niveau à l’autre.* (p. 220) ... *Les thèses créationniste et émanatiste s’entrecroisent allègrement ou prennent alternativement le relais l’une de l’autre, sans qu’il soit toujours possible de trancher nettement entre elles.* (p. 253).”

emphasized that in a Zoharic context, this absolutely does not refer to God conceived as the world soul but to God seen as the entirely transcendent and unknown cause of causes or even 'cause beyond causes'. The mystical theology of the *Zohar*, conceived much in the vein of the PSEUDO-DIONYSIOS, rigorously stipulates that the Holy One is radically beyond the ontological region in which existence as we know it is manifested. As the text of the *B^ereshith* puts it in fol. I:21a:

The thought of the blessed Holy One is the concealed, enveloped, supernal א (alef); no human thought in the entire world can either grasp or know it. If what is suspended in supernal thought cannot be grasped by anyone, all the more so thought itself! Within (this) thought – who can conceive an idea? Understanding fails to even pose a question, much less to know. Ein Sof (אין סוף) contains no trace at all; no question applies to It, nor (the) conceiving (which is) contemplating any thought. From within concealing of the concealed, from the initial descent (i.e., Keter) of Ein Sof, radiates a tenuous radiance (נהיר נהירו, i.e., Hokhmah), unknown, concealed in tracing like the point of a needle, mystery of concealment of thought. Unknown, until a radiance extends from it to a realm (i.e., Binah) containing tracings of all letters, issuing from there.²⁶⁴

Hence, the source of all later Cabbalistic notions and conceptions, the *Zohar* already attributes a sort of expansion (פשׁיטו, *p^eshita*) to the spiritual substance of infinite divine essence, whereby, through a cascade of emanating principles, the several grades of the spiritual upper world come into existence, and, ultimately, also the lower material world will emerge. In this process, the supernal essence is realised on lower and lower grades, which are ever included in, and maintained in existence by, the upper grades, ultimately by the power emanating from the *En-Soph* itself.

As we have seen, the *B^ereshith* does not apply the term *tsim-tsum* proper to the process of the cosmogonical expansion of God. Apparently, the first philosopher to have done this was rabbi Isaac LURIA, who at once fundamentally reinterpreted the Zoharic concept of the expansion of God, as it can be seen from the Latin *synopsis* (*Tractatus I. Libri Druschim*), of the first book of the Hebrew redaction of his teachings. This *synopsis*, subtitled *Introductio Metaphysica ad Cabbalam*, is included as text № 4 of the second part of volume one (1677) of VON ROSENROTH'S *Kabbala denudata* (pp. 28–51). With this short treatise then, we are probably at the first source of LESSING'S conception of the shrinking and spreading movement of God (conceived by him simultaneously as the universal soul).

Though rabbi LURIA'S doctrine was no doubt inspired by the *Zohar*, it is also essentially different from it in many aspects. From a formal point of view, his teachings, as they were systematized by his major disciple HAYYIM VITAL in the *Sepher ha-D^rushim* and then epitomized in Latin by ROSENROTH, put on the character of philosophical discourse proper, in which a relatively strict terminology is used, and

²⁶⁴ MATT ed., vol. I, p. 161 (interpretative words added in angled parentheses; the names of the three first *Sephiroth* added on the basis of the footnotes in MATT'S translation). A more explicitly Proclean–Dionysian digression on the concept of God as the cause *beyond* all causes, the *causa supra omnes causas* (which is even above the *causa causarum*, or first cause, on the ontological scale), is to be found in fol. I:22b. As MATT points out, however, §. I:22a–29a of the *Zohar* belongs to a later addition, the so-called *Tikkunei ha-Zohar* ("Supplements of the *Zohar*", comp. after 1290, cf. SCHOLEM 1978, pp. 59–60), on account of which MATT does not include it in his translation. It is included in less scrupulous editions like, e.g., that of SIMON et al., eds., vol. I, p. 93.

in which a thesis is followed by an argument, etc. Hence, the *Tractatus I. Libri Druschim* is no longer conceived as a commentary on Scriptural passages, but as a treatise which strives to logically expound intuitively conceived metaphysical-cosmogonical doctrines.

On the other hand, as concerns the less formal aspects of his work, LURIA'S universe of thought is still a long way away from that of HERRERA, who is a full-fledged philosopher well versed in the conceptual world and history of Western philosophy. To wit, LURIA'S thinking is characterized by a thorough anthropomorphism (especially in his conception of the *Adam Kadmon*, primordial man) and by a tendency to present philosophical ideas sometimes in an imaginative-visualizing rather than conceptual manner.

Yet, indisputably, rabbi LURIA is an original metaphysician and mystic, whose dependence on the Jewish theosophical tradition is perhaps best recognised by virtue of his doctrine on the absolute transcendence of God, whereas his originality is best expressed, among other things, by his idea of the *tsim-tsum* (best translated as the 'retraction' of God). As we shall see, the two doctrines are philosophically deeply related in LURIA'S conception. As far as the transcendence of God is concerned, he teaches, in accord with the theological vision of the *Zohar*, that God, as the source of being, is transcendent, infinite and absolutely unknowable; that He is timeless, atemporal; and that He expanded His substance to form the several different spheres of existence that are the spiritual worlds, which foster in their centre the material universe. As he puts it in an introductory summarizing statement:

*Therefore, we have to know that, in short, the supreme and most elevated Light of all things, which is infinite and is called infinite, can not be reached by any cogitation or speculation, and that its fundament is completely remote from every intellect. It had existed before anything was produced, created, formed, or made by emanation. There has been no time in this Light, nor any beginning of time because it has always existed and will remain forever as it is exempt from beginning or end. From this Infinite Being, then, there descended, subsequently, the existence of that grand light which was produced by emanation and is called Adam Kadmon, the Adam prior to all first things. After, the lights dependent on it descended from it in a similar fashion. Since then, four worlds started to depend on it, namely, those of emanation, creation, formation, and making ... The emanation of this First Light and the other worlds which are subordinate to the first emanation do have a beginning and an end, nor are they exempt from time, as far as their existence and emanation is concerned ... Hence, the existence of creation, i.e., of all created things ... depends, up to this very moment, on the time when these lights, that is, the afore-mentioned worlds, started to expand and to emit emanations. ... Because every world has been created after the creation of the world prior to it. Every world has first been created, then they have expanded and descended. Each of them came forth under the stimulus of another at a different time, till this process arrived at the creation of the present world and then this world was created, at the assigned time, when the higher worlds had already been created ...*²⁶⁵

²⁶⁵ "Sciendum igitur est breviter; Quod Lux suprema omnium & celsissima sine carens, & infiniti Nomine appellata nulla cogitatione nullaque speculatione attingi queat, ejusque fundamentum abstractum plane sit & remotum ab omni intellectu: quodque fuerit ante omnia Emanatione producta, creata, formata & facta, nullumque in illa fuerit tempus, ejusve caput vel initium; cum semper extiterit & maneat perpetuo, omni principio & sine carens. Ab hoc infinito autem postmodum descendit Existentia Luminis illius magni Emanatione producti, quod vocatur Adam Kadmon, Adam omnibus primis prior; Deinde similiter ab isto descendunt lumina ab ipso dependentia ... Deinceps

From God as the recondite fundament of being first descended the primordial light LURIA calls Adam Kadmon. Canalized by this first emanation of light, the lower, but still spiritual outflows (*sephiroth*) gush forth from the plenitude of the divine essence. Adam Kadmon (primordial man), as the chief instrument of the Infinite One, further brings forth, in a philosophically undetermined manner, four worlds, those of emanation, creation, forming and making, respectively. As we learn from other passages,²⁶⁶ these worlds are hierarchically ordered in a manner that the ontologically higher ones concentrically envelop the lower ones, in what is represented as spiritual space, with the corporeal material world situated in the centre of the spiritual worlds.

None of these worlds is, however, eternal: the infinite source of being emits them, as it were, in repeated waves of emanation.²⁶⁷ Thus, each of the four grades exists for a determined period of time, in which it first comes to be (“*creati sunt*”) then expands (“*expansio et emissio*”) and ‘descends’ (“*demissi*”), finally to pass away completely,²⁶⁸ making space for a new process of emanation to begin. Complete universes, symbols of God’s infinite creative power, unfold and collapse one after the other in this manner. This is, in essence, the Lurian theory of the *cosmogonical pulsation of God*.²⁶⁹

ab illo dependent quatuor mundi, Emanationis scilicet, Creationis, Formationis, & Factionis ... Jam vero Emanatio Lucis hujus primae, & caeteri mundi qui sub ipsa sunt, principium & finem habent, nec tempore destituuntur quoad existentiam atque emanationem suam ... Ab illo igitur tempore, quo coepit expansio & emissio ista horum luminum, Mundorumque dictorum[;]{,} dependet existentia creationis, notio scilicet[,] omnium creatorum ... usque ad hoc ipsum momentum. ... Quilibet enim Mundus creatus est[,] post creationem mundi semet superioris; & mundi singuli creati sunt, atque extensi, atque demissi, & procedunt alius sub alio, temporibus diversis ... donec ordo tangeret creationem mundi hujus: atque tunc iste creatus est, tempore sibi debito, creatis prius mundis superioribus.” (PEUCKERT and RANKE eds., vol. I, pp. 29–30. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

²⁶⁶Cf. “... quicumque enim circulus (of the emanations) propior est Infinito, pro superiore & excellentiore habetur, donec inveniamus mundum istum materialem punctum esse medium circulatorum & ipsius quoque Spatii Locique vacui supra descripti, adeoque & remotissimum ab Infinito, remotione κατ’ἔξοχὴν sic dicenda prae omnibus mundis reliquis: unde & corporeus est & materialis perfecta corporeitate.” (*Ibid.*, p. 37.)

²⁶⁷On the basis of the Latin epitome of the first book of the *Sepher ha-D^rrushim*, it is difficult philosophically to specify whether *all* four kinds of worlds come to be by way of emanation, or only the highest one(s) of them. The compiler of the Latin text seems to utilize indistinctively the terms *emanatione producere* and *creare*, as well as their derivatives, in most contexts. To resolve this question, one should go back to the Hebrew text of HAYYIM VITAL’S original redaction.

²⁶⁸On the periodical annihilation of the universe, cf. “*Relictus autem est Locus vacuus ... in quo constituti & destructi sunt atque emanarunt omnes reliqui mundi, qui omnes pendent, & contenti sunt in hoc Adamo primo, & ab ipso prodeunt.*” (*Ibid.*, p. 43; underlining added.)

²⁶⁹LURIA’S cosmological scheme, as propounded in the Latin epitome of the first book of the *Sepher ha-D^rrushim*, is in reality more complex, since it also seems to posit the parallel existence of indefinitely numerous universes, each of which is conceived to be fourfold in its structure, and to be situated in the ‘cavity’ in the middle of the extended spiritual substance of God. Thus, Lurian cosmology wants to give an idea of the infinite creative power of God through a sort of many-world-theory, as it appears from the following passage: “*Notum autem atque perspicuum nobis est, quot mundorum species emanent, creatae & formatae atque factae sint, millies nempe mille & myriades myriadum; quae omnes simul subsistunt intra locum hunc vacuum supradictum, quippe extra quem nihil est horum.*” (*Ibid.*, p. 36; underlining added.)

In a first instance, it must be pointed out that in contrast to LESSING'S idea, it is not the substance of God itself which spreads and shrinks, but His manifestative emanation, while the essence of God as the eternal *En-Soph* fully preserves its transcendence. LURIA emphasizes this as he strives to establish a real ontological difference between the infinite light, immediately emanating from the transcendent source of being, and the first spiritual world, the highest *Sephira*.²⁷⁰

But LURIA'S general theory of the cosmogonical pulsation of God implies the more specific concept of a *contractio Dei* as a constitutive element. This is what has been referred to as the concept of the *tsim-tsum*, and which may be regarded as a more immediate source of LESSING'S conception of the periodical contractions and expansions of God (considered as the universal soul), though, as we shall see, LESSING distorted the original Lurian idea to a considerable extent. As concerns the *En-Soph*'s primordial emanation, LURIA specifies that when the infinite light of God first occupied the entire spiritual space (conceived as globular in point of shape), God had to *retract* His light in order to make space available for the emanating entities to fill it. Importantly, LURIA thought that the infinite light (or primordial substance) of God has to retract *toward the external parts* of the spherical spiritual space, creating, as it were, a 'cavity' in the middle of the divine substance:

We have to know that before the emanating things emanated and the created things were created, the Supreme Light had fully expanded and filled up every place so that there was no empty place left ..., nor free space but everything was full of that Infinite Light, which extended in this manner and was completely endless, so much so, that there was not anything but this expanded Light, which, by a plain uniformity, was entirely homogeneous with itself everywhere. This Light is called Or Haensoph, i.e. the Light of the Infinite One.

When this expanded being conceived a desire to establish worlds and to produce emanations by emanating them ..., then that Light, compressing itself to a certain extent, withdrew from the central point toward the sides and thus, it left an empty place behind, which is called hollow space and which was equally extended in all directions from that point which was established exactly in its centre.

This compression was of equal measure on all sides, around what is called the centre, in the entire space, so that that empty place was completely circular ... nor can it be conceived to have displayed any square or angular form, in so far as that contraction of the

²⁷⁰Cf. "... *dicendum, lucem hanc (Infiniti) post ingressum non statim via recta pergere deorsum (towards the medial point of the emanated universe), sed sensim illuc derivari; adeo, ut datis primis cursus rectilinei initiis, mox deflectat ad figuram circularem, orbemque illico consuat circumcirca tenuem, qui circulus tamen Luci Infinitae in circuitu suo non usquequaque adhaerescat: quippe quod si fieret, res sane ad pristinum recideret statum, & circulus iste per Lucem Infiniti destrueretur, nec apparere posset orbita ejus, & omnia tantum Ipsa Lux illa Infinita forent, sicut antea: Unde circulus iste, propinquus quidem erit concavo Infiniti, non tamen adhaerebit eidem ullo nexu ..."* (*Ibid.*, p. 34.) Added underlining marks the parts where LURIA wishes to establish a real difference between primordial light, i.e., the divine substance, and emanated parts of it.

*Infinite One is found to have been of equal measure on all sides, whereby it must also have been circular in point of form. After all, why should that Light which had been equally extended on all sides before have contracted itself unequally, bestowing more of itself to one side than to another?*²⁷¹

The specifically Lurian feature of the theory of the contraction of God is thus not that the substance of God shrunk *around its centre*, but that it retracted or withdrew *toward the periphery* of the spherically conceived spiritual space, leaving a *conca-vum*, as LURIA says, in the middle of God's substance. Hence, the retracted infinite light surrounds *ab extra* the space into which the emanated universe then may flow out, building in concentric spheres the four worlds.²⁷² By adopting this procedure, God could bring forth the emanated worlds so as gradually to decrease the radiance of His primordial light, and to establish an order and hierarchy of being according to pre-conceived measure (*mensura*).

LESSING's concept of the contraction of God, as it will have been noticed, is, in many aspects, different from this but it does appear as an idiosyncratic combination of the above-sketched Cabbalistic theory of *tsim-tsum* with the Stoic or perhaps Platonic theory of the world soul. When LESSING, to believe JACOBI, says that God "*has to, as it were, withdraw Himself into Himself from time to time*" ("*mißte ... von Zeit zu Zeit, sich in sich selbst gewissermassen zurückziehen*"), he combines a Spinozistic-immanentist concept of God with the Cabbalistic conception of the cosmogonical pulsation of the absolutely transcendent *En-Soph*. In other words, LESSING, while he uses the term 'contraction', neglects the original Lurianic sense of the concept of the *tsim-tsum*, the retraction of the divine substance towards the periphery of the spiritual universe. But the cosmogonical pulsation of God, the whole gigantic cycle of emanation, the Cabbalistic theory concerning the periodical construction and destruction of spiritual and material worlds may well be seen (and we argue that it really was so seen by LESSING), if with a degree of philosophical imprecision, as the "*perpetual ebb*

²⁷¹"Scito, quod antequam emanarent emanantia, & creata essent creata, Lux suprema extensa fuerit plenissime, & impleverit omne Ubi, adeo ut nullus daretur Locus vacuus ... nullumque spatium inane, sed omnia essent plena Luce illa Infiniti hoc modo extensa, cui ... finis non erat, eo, quod nihil esset, nisi extensa illa Lux, quae una quadam & simplici aequalitate ubique sibi erat similis; atque ista vocabatur Or Haensoph Lux Infiniti. Cum autem in mentem veniret Extenso huic, quod vellet condere mundos, & emanando producere Emanantia ... tum compressa quadantenus Lux ista, a puncto quodam medio circumcirca ad latera recessit; atque sic relictus est Locus quidam vacuus, dictus spatium inane, aequidistans a puncto illo, exacte in medio ejus constituto. Compressio autem illa undiquaque sibi aequalis fuit circa centrum dictum per omne spatium, adeo ut locus ille vacuus[,] exacte esset circularis ...: nec concipi hic potest ulla quadratura vel angulositas, cum contractio ista Infiniti statuatur undiquaque sibi fuisse aequalis, unde & circularis: cur enim Lux illa, quae identica quadam aequalitate antehac ubique aequalis erat, inaequaliter sese contraxisset, uni lateri plus, alteri minus tribuendo?" (*Ibid.*, pp. 32–33. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting added.)

²⁷²See further summaries of the process of *tsim-tsum* in pp. 33 and 40–41.

and flow" of the divine substance. As the greatest ever expert of Jewish Cabbala, G. SCHOLEM, put it in a statement about I. LURIA'S, and his school's, concept of *tsim-tsum*:

*Just as the human organism exists through the double process of inhaling and exhaling and the one cannot be conceived without the other, so also the whole of Creation constitutes a gigantic process of divine inhalation and exhalation.*²⁷³

As the last part of the present point, we hope to further substantiate our proposition that LESSING'S statement concerning the periodical shrinking and spreading of God, considered by LESSING simultaneously as the universal soul, is to be interpreted within the terminological and philosophical context of early modern Jewish Cabbala. In order to demonstrate that claim, we come now to the discussion of the major philosophical theological work, *Puerta del Cielo*, of the philosophically most inclined as well as accomplished, early modern Jewish Cabbalist, Abraham Cohen HERRERA. In a first approach, we examine his conception of the contraction of God as it is expounded, in a Latin epitome entitled, *Porta coelorum ...*, in a source which was immediately at hand for eighteenth-century German intellectuals: the *Kabbala denudata*, supplement (1678) to vol. I, pp. 1–192. In our footnotes, we cite HERRERA'S Spanish original from the calligraphic Den Haag manuscript *Puerta del Cielo ...* in a letter-perfect transcription.²⁷⁴

With HERRERA'S person and theology, we literally enter a different world from that of rabbi LURIA. While LURIA, a 'visionary' (as SCHOLEM qualifies him), lived the life of a rabbi in a drowsy Palestine, then in the grasp of the Ottoman empire, HERRERA led the life of a commercial and political representative as a member of the tolerated and even respected Sephardic Jewish community of bustling Amsterdam, in a country, among the first in Europe, that was on its way to achieving political independence as a republic. On a philosophical level, the difference between them is just as marked. LURIA was educated first and foremost in the rabbinical and Zoharic literature, which he mystically contemplated in his solitary retreat in Egypt.²⁷⁵ HERRERA, though initiated into the Lurianic doctrines by his

²⁷³SCHOLEM 1971, p. 263. Our previous citation, of the expression "perpetual ebb and flow", is *ibid.*

²⁷⁴See full description of the manuscript in the bibliography, under HERRERA. Note that in his Latin epitome of the Hebrew translation of the *Puerta del Cielo*, VON ROSENROTH simply left out the first two books of HERRERA'S work altogether, so the *Tercero Liuro* of the *Puerta del Cielo* became *Dissertatio Prima* in the *Kabbala denudata* etc. He also abandoned or very significantly condensed several chapters from many books of the *Puerta del Cielo*, while here and there he only paraphrased certain passages. Further, he introduced paragraphs into HERRERA'S text, though these are absent from the original. Despite all this, his translation goes remarkably close to the original Spanish text, which he did not know.

²⁷⁵That is, before leaving Egypt for Palestine.

teacher I. SARUG, was perfectly well versed in classical Western philosophy, especially the (Neo-)platonist tradition.²⁷⁶

Further, HERRERA is a systematic philosopher who strives to forge an original combination of rational theology with Cabbalistic theosophical intuition. Thus, he conserves the traditionally Cabbalistic concept of God as the ineffable Boundless One (“... *concluditur, quod essentia & natura Dei sit incommunicabilis ...*”),²⁷⁷ but qualifies it in consistently Western philosophical terminology as “*the Necessary Being and First Cause*”,²⁷⁸ which is “*simple and perfect*”,²⁷⁹ and is infinite in respect of essence, perfection, potency, as well as perennial and ubiquitous.²⁸⁰

It is precisely in his interpretation of the Lurianic concept of the cosmogonical contraction of God that HERRERA is the most innovative and intellectually independent, as he proffers a philosophically refined or ‘purged’ version of the originally imaginative-visualizing idea of the *tsim-tsum*. While this concept in its primordial, rudimentary form was intended by LURIA to literally designate the act of shrinkage and retraction of the extended spiritual substance of God, HERRERA abandons the literal meaning of the concept, and metaphorically reinterprets it to mean the *determination of the divine intellect and will*, whereby he refers to the considered choice of God in the act of emanation. Hence, for LURIA, the *tsim-tsum* is a concept that

²⁷⁶ This is expressed already by the Latin title ROSENROTH gave to his epitome of HERRERA'S book. The main part of the title reads “... *Porta Coelorum, In quo Dogmata Cabbalistica ... Philosophice proponuntur & explicantur, cumque Philosophia Platonica conferuntur*” (see fuller title below in a footnote). It is in fact probable that the philosophically most serious Jewish Cabbalistic text published in the *Kabbala denudata* is precisely this work of HERRERA'S. The respective works of PLATO and PLOTINUS, very often referred to by HERRERA, were available from the end of the fifteenth century in FICINO'S classic Latin translation, published in Florence. HERRERA, who grew up in Italy, more precisely in Florence (cf. SCHOLEM ed., 1974, p. 13), could no doubt consult these translations.

²⁷⁷ *Apparatus in Librum Sohar pars tertia & quarta, Quarum prior est Liber השמיים* (Shar Hashamayim) *Seu Porta coelorum, in quo Dogmata Cabbalistica de Æn-Soph, Adam Kadmon, Zimzum, Aziluth, Briah, Jezirah, Asiah ... Philosophice proponuntur & explicantur, cumque Philosophia Platonica conferuntur, Dissertatio Prima, Caput II, § 6*; PEUCKERT and RANKE eds., supplement to vol. I, p. 7. The Spanish manuscript here reads “... *assi tambien es yncomunicable la esencia y naturaleza de dios ...*”, in the Den Haag copy of the *Puerta del cielo, Tercero Liuro* (scil. *Libro*), *Capitulo II*, p. 28 *recto*.

²⁷⁸ “*Ens necessarium & Causa prima*” (PEUCKERT and RANKE eds., supplement to vol. I, p. 25 = “*que es el por sy necessario y Cauza primera*”, in *Puerta del cielo, Tercero Liuro, Capitulo VIII*, p. 32 *verso*. English transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

²⁷⁹ “*simplex & perfectum*” (PEUCKERT and RANKE eds., supplement to vol. I, p. 8 = “*del todo singilissimo y puro*”, in *Puerta del cielo, Tercero Liuro, Capitulo III*, p. 28 *recto*. English transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

²⁸⁰ Cf. “*Et hae tres species infinitatis, nempe infinitas essentiae, perfectionis & potentiae actualis; infinitas aeternitatis & perennitatis, infinitas ubiquitatis & adessentia in omnibus locis & spatiis, quae sunt & esse possunt, per se competunt Causae primae infinitae: & haec ob hanc rationem a Cabbalisticis vocatur Æn-Soph, Numen Infinitum.*” PEUCKERT and RANKE eds., supplement to vol. I, p. 67 = “... *y estas tres maneras de ynfinidad, Conuiene a saber, la de esencia, perfection o actiua potencia, la de eternidad, y de duracion ynterminada estable y fixa: y la de ynmensidad de presencia, y asistencia a todos los espacios, o lugares reales y posibles Conuienen propriamente a la ynfinita Cauza primera, que por esta razon es llamada de nuestros diuinos Ensoph, o ynfinito ...*” in *Puerta del Cielo, Quinto Liuro, Capitulo I*, p. 45 *verso*-46 *recto*.

essentially denotes the infinite productivity of God in the sense of a (chronologically and spatially) almost absolutely unrestricted emanation (indefinitely numerous parallel worlds emanate from God eternally),²⁸¹ whereas for HERRERA the *tsim-tsum* is, in a first instance, a 'restriction (i.e., determination to something) of the divine intellect and power' ('*restrictio intellectiois & potentiae Dei*'). In the act of the 'contraction of God', God precisely critically scrutinizes and *reduces* the number, kind and quality of the worlds to be emanated, so as by far *not* all possible worlds should come to be.²⁸² In a second instance, the theory of the 'contraction of God' is developed in HERRERA's conception into the essential dialectical tool that can establish the ontological real difference between the First Cause and Its effects, in that the contraction of God is seen as the act by which He preserves and reserves for Himself (as it were, 'stores away' in the divine essence) infinity, i.e., the attribute in which the finite entities may not participate.

When HERRERA next speaks about the *expansion* ('*extendi*') of God, he refers to the act of God by which He attributes an ontologically semi-independent existence to the entities He has decided to call into being by the determination (*contractio*) of His will. So HERRERA, the philosopher, will not hesitate to say that his spiritual master ("*doctor noster*") was speaking *mystice* ('metaphorically') about the shrinking movement of the divinity, when in reality LURIA spoke *proprie* (univocally). Let us consider the *figurative* philosophical use(s) of the terms *contractio* and *extendi*, and their cognates, in the following summary of HERRERA's position on the metaphysical relationship between God and the emanated universe:

§ 3. *Especially, all what has been said above, in chapter 13, may be summarized in the following ten conclusions: 1. Æn-Soph restricted, determined and limited his power of operation and his force in proportion to the capacity of the produced things and to the nature of the dependent things. 2. Although He is infinite, He restricts his intellect and will according to the finite effects ... 3. In so far as He imparted a finite essence to them, they have remained, in some way, defectuous and devoid of that infinity which He possesses in*

²⁸¹ It has to be specified that although LURIA's concept of the eternal creative act of God lacks the momentum of *deliberation* or considered choice, it does have that of *volition*. The indefinitely numerous and parallelly existing worlds may not emanate from the recondite source of the *En-Soph* without *En-Soph* explicitly willing them to emanate, even though It does not seem to scrutinize them beforehand in respect of number, kind and quality etc. Cf. the following expression of this in LURIA's *D^erushim* as epitomized by ROSENROTH: "*Cum autem in mentem veniret Extenso huic, quod vellet condere mundos, & emanando producere Emanantia ...*" (PEUCKERT and RANKE eds., vol. I, p. 32; underlining added. See continuation of citation above, in the main text.)

²⁸² Cf. *Dissertatio tertia, cap. VII, § 2*: "*Haec autem intellectio naturalis & necessaria, qua intellectus divinus cognoscit potentiam suam in se infinitam, qua facere posset entia infinita locisque & temporibus infinitis, restringitur a voluntate & arbitrio Ejus, quo ea tantum producere concludit, quae admiranda & occulta suo consilio decernit, talia esse, quae produci debeant ... Insimul autem intra se praetermisit quam plurima, quae producere nec voluit, nec unquam voliturus est.*" PEUCKERT and RANKE eds., supplement to vol. I, p. 70 = "... este conocimiento natural y necesario, con que conoce el diuino entendimiento[,] a su ynfinito vigor ... {,} Sigue su libre voluntad y beneplacito, que determina de producir solamente aquellos efectos que su oculissimo Consejo[,] juzga que conuiene que della {scil. de su voluntad} procedan y actualmente existan ... dexando en si otras muchas que no quiso producir, ni produzira nunca ..." in *Puerta del Cielo, Quinto Liuro, Capitulo VII, p. 52 verso*.

Himself. 4. This diminished value of the effect derives from that its cause (scil. God) does not extend itself into it without any limitations. 5. Since that Blessed One does not belong among the number of its own effects but is superior to all of them, He made all things equal as compared to His own eminence. 6. The Necessary Being, which exists by itself and is one in point of number, can not be 'pulled apart' so as to become many. Yet it is, as it were, multiplied in its effects ... 7. It is impossible that an effect should be either completely similar to or fully different from the First Cause. Hence, God has given it something of what He is Himself but also has refused it something, namely, infinity, which He, by virtue of the often-named contraction, held back within Himself and denied to the effect. 8. Since it can not be that any effect is completely similar to its cause, the effect is necessarily composed of unity and multiplicity. Of unity, in so far as it is analogous to its cause; of multiplicity, in so far as it is inferior to its cause by reason of its contracted and separated character. Hence, it is a remote image of its cause. 9. The infinity of God, which can not have any limit, is followed by the kind of finitude which is, in itself, exempt from any limit but may receive it. This is the indefinite potency, i.e., the formless as well as the informed substance which, by virtue of their cause, receive a formative influence, like, e.g., the contraction which brings forth space and the specific influence which fills space up. 10. Since God excels any of His effects, He withdrew Himself into Himself so that He should not converge with any of them. It is by virtue of this withdrawal that He is perceived as a being separate from all the rest. However, since He also applies Himself to all as the cause of the essences, potencies and operations of things, He is also all in all so that He is intimately present in the things, according as we say that He is the light that fills them up.²⁸³

²⁸³§ 3. *Specialissime vero c. 13. supra dicta omnia contrahuntur in decem conclusiones sequentes. 1. quod Æn-Soph restrinxerit, & determinaverit, atque limitaverit potentiam suam operandi, atque vim suam ad dispositionem potentiae producti, naturamque dependentis. 2. quod, quamvis sit Infinitus ... tamen determinaverit intellectum & voluntatem suam ad Causata finita. 3. quod, quatenus ipsis infudit essentiam finitam, hoc ipso quodammodo permanserint defectuosa, & infinitate illa carentia, quam ipse in se habet. 4. quod diminutor hic gradus causati ex eo proveniat, quod causa ejus non absolute in illud extendatur. 5. quod, quia benedictus ille non est de numero causatorum suorum, sed omnibus eminentior, respectu istius eminentiae omnia produxerit aequaliter. 6. quod ens necessarium per se subsistens & unum, ut propterea in multa distendi nequeat, tamen quasi multiplex fiat in causatis ... 7. Quia impossibile est, ut causatum omnino simile vel omnino dissimile sit Causae primae; quod Deus propterea eidem aliquid dederit de eo, quod ipse est: & aliquid non dederit, nempe infinitatem, quam per saepe dictam contractionem intra se cohibuit, & illi negavit. 8. Quod, quia fieri non potest, ut ullum causatum plane simile sit causae suae, id necessario compositum sit ex unitate, & multiplicitate. Ex unitate, quatenus est analogum causae suae; ex multiplicitate autem, quatenus illa inferius est per contractionem & separationem; adeoque ab illius similitudine abscedit. 9. Quod infinitudinem Dei, quae terminum habere non potest, sequatur finitudo, quae privata quidem est termino, (sed eum tamen habere potest:) nempe potentia indefinita, vel substantia informis, & formata, quae nempe per applicationem causae suae, accipit conformationem, ut sunt contractio, quae efficit spatium; & influxus, qui illud implet. 10. Quod Deus, cum omnibus causatis sit eminentior, ita retraxerit sese in se, ut cum nullo illorum conveniat; & per hanc retractionem ab omnibus videatur separatus. Sed quia etiam applicatur ad omnia, tanquam causa quoad essentiam, potentiam, & operationem eorum, simul tamen etiam sit omnia in omnibus: ut, quia ut dicimus, ipse est lux, quae illa implet, ipsis plane sit intimus.” (HERRERA: *Porta coelorum, Dissertatio quinta, cap. XI–XII, § 3.* PEUCKERT and RANKE eds., supplement to vol. I, pp. 107–108. English transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting added.) The original Spanish text, in HERRERA'S *Puerta del Cielo, Septimo Liuro, Capitulo XIII*, pp. 100 recto-verso, reads as follows: “Sera bien, que epilogando las (scil. las dichas consideraciones) repitamos breuemente que haremos diciendo, que (1) La Primera es, que ensoph la Cauza primera, encogió, estrechó, y proporcionó su ynfinita actiuidad y efficacia, a la Capacidad de la produzible potencia, y dependiente naturaleza; (2) la Segunda que siendo yndeterminada, se*

On the basis of this systematic *exposé*, the essence of HERRERA's teaching on the *tsim-tsum*, or cosmogonical contraction of God, is that God avails Himself of this method of emanating the universe in order to safeguard His ontological real differentia. It is by way of the *tsim-tsum* that God *reserves* for Himself the threefold infinity of His essence, while He imparts (*infudit*) a delimited essence and existence to the (fourfold) emanated worlds,²⁸⁴ from His own substance (“*aliquid dederit de eo, quod ipse est*”). This communication of a ‘narrowed-in’, i.e., no longer infinite, essence with the emanated realities is represented as an ‘*extension*’ of divine substance, yet we are told at the same time that the world is not univocally but only *quasi* God (cf. point 6).

For rabbi LURIA, by contrast, the *tsim-tsum* or *retractio Dei* is the precondition for God to produce an almost unlimited *effusion* or outpouring of His essence, whereby all existing things will be situated within God's extended spiritual substance.

determinó por entendimiento y voluntad a limitados efectos; <3> Tercera que comunicandoles finito Ser, quedaron en Cierta manera priuados y faltos de la ynfinidad, que en si retuuu <scil. retuvo>; <4> Quarta por la degeneracion del efecto, que procede de no Comunicarsele totalmente su Cauza; <5> Quinta que no siendo[,] ninguno de sus efectos, Sino sobre todos ynfinitamente eleuada, los produze con dicha eminencia yualmente a todos; <6> Sesta, que el ser por essencia Subsistente y uno, y que como tal es yncomunicable a muchos, se multiplico en los efectos, de parte de sus naturalezas, o essencias, casi receptaculos y vazios <scil. vacíos>, que contrayendo el vnico y ynlimitado Ser a varias y determinadas naturalezas y Supuestos, Son Cauza de la multitud de las Cosas; <7> Septima[,] esposicion, es que no pudiendo ser[,] el efecto en todo Semejante, ni en todo desemejante a la Cauza primera, le dio parte, Conuiene a saber, lo que es, y le quito parte, Quiero dezir{,} la ynfinidad, que casi por Zimzum del <scil. de él> separo, y en si retuuu; <8> Octaua, que no pudiendo el efecto ser puramente vno, Como lo es su Cauza, Consta necessariamente de vnidad, y multitud, de vnidad en quanto participa de su Cauza, y de multitud, en quanto degenerando della <scil. de ella> casi por Zimzum y apartamiento, le es desemejante; <9> Nona, que de la ynfinidad diuina, escluyente termino, procede la ynfinidad que careçe de termino, es a Saber{,} la yndeterminada potencia, o ynforme, y formable essencia, y de la relacion de dicha Cauza[,] nace su formacion, y ser formal distinto y perfecto, casi encogimiento que cauza vazio, y ynfusion, que lo hinche; <10> es finalmente la Decima y vltima Consideracion, o declaracion, que como perfectissima Cauza, excediendo en ynfinito a todos sus efectos, se recoge de tal manera en si, que no conuiene con ninguno dellos <scil. de ellos>, en nada, y parece que de todos haziendo Zimzum se aparta, mas Comunicandose a todos como Cauza de todo[,] lo que son, pueden, y obran; es todo, en todos; y se puede dezir, que hinchendolos de si, como de luz, está ynfusa ynteriormente en todos ellos ...” This summary of HERRERA's metaphysical doctrine is, in HERRERA's intention, the true interpretation of the Lurianic doctrine on the *tsim-tsum*, which HERRERA has systematically summarized in ten *Consideraciones, y Espusiciones* in the preceding chapter XII of the same book VII (cf. *Puerta del Cielo*, pp. 96 verso-100 recto = *Porta coelorum, Dissertatio quinta, cap. XI-XII, § 2*, in PEUCKERT and RANKE eds., supplement to vol. I, p. 106). But it is obvious that it is a thorough philosophical re-interpretation of that doctrine.

²⁸⁴ HERRERA, like LURIA, expounds the four-world-theory, according to which the four derived worlds are produced by God from the all-preceding world of the Infinite One itself, cf. “... *Causa prima & Æn-Soph in se continet omnia mundana Systemata, nempe Mundum Æn-Soph, seu Infiniti, Mundum Aziluth, seu Emanationis, Briah, seu Creationis, Jezirah, seu formationis & Asiah, seu factionis* ...” in PEUCKERT and RANKE eds., supplement to vol. I, p. 50 = “... *la Cauza primera[,] contiene en si a todos los mundos, que son el <scil. él> del ynfinito, el de la emanacion, el criado, el formado, y el hecho* ...” in *Puerta del Cielo, Quarto Liuro, Capitulo IV*, p. 39 verso.

Despite its more abstract and less imaginative character, HERRERA'S Platonizing theology may have been a just as important source for LESSING'S conception of the periodical contractions of God as the thought of LURIA because some aspects of HERRERA'S systematic theological doctrine have strangely Spinozistic overtones, which may have rendered them philosophically attractive to LESSING. Such a thesis is, first and foremost, the formula that recapitulates the metaphysical relationship between God and emanation, asserting that although this is one of non-convertibles and incommensurables, the emanated universe is still, in a specifically restricted sense, nothing but the divine essence, while God is, in a specific sense, all that really exists: "... as the First Cause is everything in an independent and infinite mode, so the things depending on it are the First Cause in a dependent and finite mode."²⁸⁵

²⁸⁵ "... sicut causa prima est omnia, modo independente & infinito; ita entia ab illa dependentia sint causa prima, sed modo dependente & finito." (*Dissertatio quinta, cap. IX, § 4*; in PEUCKERT and RANKE eds., supplement to vol. I, p. 102. English transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) The Spanish original reads: "... como la Cauza primera es todas las Cosas en modo yncausado y ynfinito, assi las mismas cosas, que della en todo dependen, Son dicha cauza, mas en modo[,] causado y finito ..." in *Puerta del Cielo, Septimo Liuro, Capitulo IX*, p. 94 verso. A more incisive exposition of the same formula concerning the partial identity of the essence of God with that of emanation is to be found at the beginning of the same § 4 of HERRERA'S text, as follows: "... dicimus: quod Æn-Soph res produxerit, partim tales, qualis ipse est, & id, quod in eo invenitur; partim tales, qualis ipse non est, & qualia in ipso non dantur. Nimirum, dedit & fecit, quod ipse est, & quod in ipso datur; sed non prout in ipso est, verum dependens ab independente, finitum ab Infinito; multiplex & compositum ab uno & simplici perfecto; potentiale ab eo, qui est vis & actus infinitus; mobile ab eo, qui permanet perenniter; adeoque modo quodam imperfioe & diminutioe, quam est perfectio ejus ynfinita." In PEUCKERT and RANKE eds., supplement to vol. I, p. 102 (highlighting added) = "... concluyamos que la cauza primera, produxo en Cierta manera[,] lo que es y tiene, y en algun modo produxo lo que no es, ni tiene; y como produxo, y Comunicando dio fuera de si[,] lo que es y posee[,] en si, mas no del modo que en si es, y lo posee, Sino en modo dependiente de sy, que es la pura vnidad, y Sensilleza (scil. simplicity), potencial[,] ; de si que es ymensa actiuidad, y eficacia, mouible ; de si, que es Sumamente permanente, y estable, y en efecto[,] con alguna ynperfection degenerante de su perficion ynfinita ..." in *Puerta del Cielo, Septimo Liuro, Capitulo IX*, p. 94 verso. Another point of philosophical affinity between SPINOZA'S and HERRERA'S respective metaphysics might be discovered on account of how they define the concept of *intellectus Dei*. For HERRERA, the intellect of God is the first, immediate emanation (conceived as Adam Kadmon, primordial man) from the infinite divine essence. The mediated emanations of God (the *Sephiroth*), then, are ontologically canalized through primordial man as they flow out from God's essence: "... sciendum est [;] Numen infinitum seu Causam primam immediate produxisse אדם קדמון (Adam Kadmon) i.e. id, quod in ipso dicitur Homo primus, qui est intellectus occultus & cogitatio divina: & ab isto subsequenter Lumina suprema produisse, quae sese exerunt in quinque decades Sephirothicas; ita quidem, ut ad productionem mundorum inferiorum ... extendatur ipsa illa essentia, quae & in Mundum Emanationis extenditur; eosque non tantum produxerit, sed & conservet & gubernet." *Porta coelorum, Dissertatio Tertia, cap. VIII and IX, § 2*, in PEUCKERT and RANKE eds., supplement to vol. I, p. 72 = "... nos emos de acordar, que de Ensoph, que es la ynfinita y yncausada fuente de toda la diuinidad procedio proximamente Adam Kadmon sublimissima y diuina mahassaba (Aram מַחַשְׁבָּה 'thought, plan') o ynteligencia, y del (scil. de él) por sus grados, las soberanas luzes, que esplicadas en sinco vezes[,] dies sephiroth, son las animas y vidas ... de la assiluth o mundo emanado ... y es de saber, que para la producion de los tres mundos siguientes ... se esplico la misma diuinidad[,] que en el mundo de la emanacion reside ... (la diuinidad) no solamente en el principio los (tres mundos) produxo, mas continuamente conserua, aplica a la operacion, dirige al fin, y es cauza que lo consigán ..." in *Puerta del cielo, Quinto Liuro, Capitulo IV* (properly IX), pp.

Before concluding the present chapter, it is important to point out, with respect to our main topic of investigation, that HERRERA also applies the concept of a "universal soul" at least in one chapter in which he paraphrases the Plotinian doctrine of the three hypostases. This chapter is significant also because it reveals a degree of philosophical affinity between LESSING's speculations on Christ as the first effect and perfect image of God the Father in the posthumous manuscripts, and the Platonizing tendency of early modern Jewish philosophical Cabbala, as represented by VON ROSENROTH's anthology. That this tendency comes to the fore precisely in the philosophy of HERRERA is perhaps not so surprising inasmuch as he, born in Florence, could be well acquainted with the Latin translations of PLOTINUS made by the Florentine FICINO.

As far as the world soul is concerned, HERRERA, in chapter 2 of the second dissertation of the *Porta coelorum*, brings in authorities to support his metaphysical thesis that the supra-essential source of being necessarily brings forth only one immediate emanation. In his conception, this single immediate effect, *principiatum summum*, will be Adam Kadmon, primordial man, whom he sees as a universal instrument and medium of all further creation, as the proximate cause of all further effects. It is at this point of the argument that a philosophical parallel with the Plotinian concept of $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ may become plausible, as HERRERA's primal man and PLOTINUS's second hypostasis, respectively, fulfil a similar function. The Plotinian Intellect as the intelligible universe of the Forms is also the proximate cause and intelligible archetype of sensible reality (cf., e.g., *Ennead* V 1, 4). Although HERRERA's thesis concerning the unicity of the *En-Soph*'s immediate effect is sufficiently supported by this philosophical analogy with the authoritative Plotinian doctrine, he goes on (agreeingly) to discuss the third Plotinian hypostase, Soul, in the following terms:

... the perfectly good being ... brought forth only one thing from itself immediately, so that this thing, which immediately emanated from the supremely sublime, one-fold One, is one being or nature (=Intellect), which encompasses every nature and entity. It is one intelligible thing, which encompasses every intelligible thing. It is, simultaneously, the First Intellect, which encompasses in itself all separate and simple intellects and all divine forms and ideas of everything, however many of them there may be. In short, the intelligible universe, which is one universal thing, emanated from the perfectly good being, which is a simple unity. The intelligible universe emanated the first, Universal Soul (=hypostasis of Soul). This is one universal thing in the substance of which is manifested, in due time and with a specific motion, that which the one-fold Intellect encompasses within itself as an eternally and uninterruptedly gushing spring.²⁸⁶

54 *recto-verso*. For SPINOZA, on the other hand, the *intellectus* or *idea Dei* is an immediate infinite *modus* of the divine attribute of *cogitatio*: "*Quare si idea Dei in cogitatione ... ex necessitate absolutae naturae ipsius attributi sequatur, id debet necessario esse infinitum*" (cf. *Ethica*, part I, proposition XXI, demonstr.). It is needless to say that the philosophical differences between HERRERA's and SPINOZA's respective systems are much more abundant. Such a difference is noticeable, e.g., on account of HERRERA's position that God freely and explicitly *deliberated* which worlds He should bring to existence and which not etc.

²⁸⁶... *Bonum perfectum ... non emisit e se proxime nisi Ens unum tantum, ita ut illud, quod immediate emanavit ab uno simplici, quod omni sublimi sublimius est, sit Ens unum, vel natura, quae comprehendit omnem naturam & entitatem; intelligibile unum, quod continet omnia intelligibilia, quodque simul sit intellectus primus, qui intra se complectitur omnes intelligentias separatas & simplices, & omnes*

HERRERA'S account of PLOTINUS'S scheme of the three hypostases is philosophically correct (and even testifies to a first-hand knowledge of PLOTINUS). But precisely because of this, the term "*anima universalis*", "universal soul", refers in it *not* to the soul of the world, *ψυχή τοῦ κόσμου* (the precise equivalent, within the Plotinian system, of the *Weltseele*), *but* to Soul as the third hypostasis. So, this is a case in which the term *anima universalis* does *not* mean the same as *anima mundi* (though in most early modern sources it does). The difference, in a philosophical respect, is a difficult one in the *Enneads* but is clearly made.²⁸⁷ *Ψυχή qua ὑπόστασις* (*anima universalis*) is a reality which includes all soul (the world soul and individual souls alike). All soul is in principle one. Yet the *ψυχή τοῦ κόσμου* (*ψυχή τοῦ παντός*) is differentiated from the Hypostasis-Soul, which is "*at the apex*",²⁸⁸ while the individual souls also behave differently from the world soul (cf. V 1, 2). HERRERA'S use of the concept *anima universalis* seems restricted to the denotation of Soul as a hypostasis; but by virtue of the semantic laxity with which this term was used, the theory of the *anima mundi* could be associated with it. Even so, however, this *anima universalis* is by no means identified with God, but is God's mediated emanation.

formas divinas & ideas omnium rerum, quotquot sunt; & uno verbo, mundus intelligibilis emanavit e Bono perfecto, & ab uno simplici unum generale, a quo emanavit Anima universalis & prima, quae est unum & generale quid, in cuius substantia certo quodam modo in tempore & motu manifestatur id, quod intellectus simplex, qui est fons perenniter & incessanter scaturiens, intra se complectitur:" (HERRERA: *Porta coelorum, Dissertatio secunda, cap. II, § 3*; PEUCKERT and RANKE eds., supplement to vol. I, p. 40. English transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, underlining added.) The Spanish original of the *Puerta del Cielo, Quarto Liuro*, chapter 2, pp. 36 verso-37 recto, reads: "... *Suma bondad ... no explica proximately fuera de si, sino vna sola cosa; de manera, que lo que proximately emana de aquel vno, que es sobre todo, es vno todo, Conuiene a saber, Vn ente o ser, que contiene todos los entes y seres, un ynteligible que en si comprehende a todos los ynteligibles, y que es el primero entendimiento que abraza en si a todos los puros y separados entendimientos, y todas las ydeas, y exemplares de todas las Cosas, y en effecto un mundo ynteligible producido del Sumo bien y puro vno, vno todo, de quien procede la anima vniversal y primera, que es ya vno, y todo, porque en cierta manera esplica en si con sucession y mouimiento, lo que el puro entendimiento, que es su origen, establemente en si comprehende ...*" (Underlining added.) HERRERA further elaborates on the Plotinian concept of "universal soul" in *Dissertatio secunda, cap. II, § 6*, saying that "*Quamvis enim & haec (scil. 'Anima universalis & prima') sit una in substantia, & una in momento, nec in tempore, ita ut per naturam suam moveatur & assequatur rem unam post aliam, & actum post actum: nec etiam sit materia completa & formata, quippe quae, cum remotior sit ab Uno simplici & causa prima, minimam habet unitatem, adeoque extenditur per distantiam localem & spatium, quod tantum occupat motus, qui ab anima communicatur, & a pluralitate & diversitate formarum, quae ab intellectu praenoscutur, & isti superadditur ...*" (PEUCKERT and RANKE eds., supplement to vol. I, p. 42.) = *Puerta del Cielo, Quarto Liuro*, chapter 2, pp. 37 recto-verso: "... *la anima vniuersal y primera ... aunque unida en essencia y punto, no lo es en momento, por ser por su naturaleza mouible, y alcanzar vna Cosa, despues de otra, ni tampoco la total y formada materia, que como mas lexana (lejana) del puro vno y Cauza primera es menos vna y por Consiguiente dilatada en los espacios del Sitio y lugar que ocupa de mas del mouimiento que de la anima participa, y de la variedad y multitud deforma (Latin paraphrase significantly different); con que el entendimiento parece & (?) a que se puede añadir ...*"

²⁸⁷ Two very detailed studies on this complicated issue are ATKINSON (Chapter 2, especially pp. 22–24 and, first and foremost, p. 42) and BLUMENTHAL.

²⁸⁸ ATKINSON, p. 42.

In conclusion, it seems reasonable to suggest that (1) though LESSING's here examined statement differs from LURIA's concept of the cosmogonical retraction of God in that LURIA conceives the divine substance to retreat toward the periphery of the spiritual universe; and that (2) although LESSING's idea also differs from that of HERRERA in that HERRERA metaphorically reinterprets the doctrine of *retractio Dei* (so that LESSING is not simply *adopting* an ancient but modernized Cabbalistic theosophical idea), still, (3) LESSING clearly borrowed from LURIA, and then reinterpreted according to his own mind, the concept of God's periodical cosmogonical contractions, while (4) he may have been philosophically attracted by the tendentially 'Spinozistic' metaphysics of HERRERA, which also applied the same concept.²⁸⁹ LESSING further freely combined this modernized Lurian theory with that of the world soul, conceived potentially not so much in a Platonic as in a Stoic sense, as we shall propose in our following point.

12 LESSING's Statement about God Conceived as the World Soul (2): The Idea of God's Cosmogonical Contraction and Expansion in H. MORE's *Fundamenta Philosophiae sive Cabbalae Aëto-paëdo-melissaeae* (1677), and VAN HELMONT's *Seder Olam ...* (1693). WACHTER's Involuntary Propagation of the Idea of *tsim-tsum* in *Der Spinozismus im Judenthum* (1699). Stoic Theology as a Potential Source of LESSING's Concept of a 'Personal' God, Who Is Simultaneously the World Soul. LESSING's 'Esoterical Rationalism'

In our citation (Section 11) from JACOBI's *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza*, we have seen that LESSING conceived of God, taken as the universal soul, analogically with the soul of a living being, which as a compound substance is composed of an organic body and a soul. Returning now to this statement (after our preceding analysis of the Cabbalistic theory of the cosmogonical pulsation of God), we can

²⁸⁹The idea of a *contractio Dei* is, further, the first among the 131 *Theses cabbalisticæ* (subtitled "צמצום", text № 8, pp. 150–172, in the second part of the *Kabbala denudata*), which is the Latin compendium of Naphthali BACHARACH's *Emek ha-Melekh* (Amsterdam 1648; title translated literally, as 'Vallis regia', in Christian Cabbalistic literature, but SCHOLEM translates 'The Mystical Depths of the King', cf. SCHOLEM 1971, p. 258). As SCHOLEM says, this work is a presentation of Lurianic Cabbala according to I. SARUG's conception. The first thesis of the Latin epitome, then, is the often-cited statement "*l. Deus creaturus mundos Contraxit praesentiam suam*" (p. 150). The following five pages offer a lucid systematic introduction into the essential doctrines of Lurianic Cabbala, while the rest are essentially esoteric speculations (partly *Cabbala litteralis*) about the *Sephiroth*.

point out that LESSING did not regard this as a perfect analogy, for according to JACOBI'S report, he further specified that:

*... the organic extension of the soul (scil. of the world) could not be thought of as analogous to the organic parts of that extension inasmuch as there could be nothing outside it to which it could refer; nothing from which it could take anything and nothing to which it could give anything back. Therefore, in order to continue to exist at all, it would have to retire, so to speak, into itself from time to time; it would have to unite within itself life, death, and resurrection.*²⁹⁰

In this passage, LESSING presupposes that a particular living being is an 'organic part of the extension' (*Umfang*) of the world soul, because on the world soul hypothesis, an individual animal is included in the spiritual substance of the world soul. By virtue of this premiss, LESSING notes that the analogy between God conceived as the world soul, and a particular living being, breaks down at a certain point, inasmuch as the cosmic living being, the soul of which is God, will not have an external source of nourishment ("*um sich im Leben zu erhalten*"), whereby its metabolism (the principle of its bodily life) cannot be maintained. This is, then, a biological–physiological rationale for positing, in God, a cycle of contractions and expansions, which LESSING interprets as the death and resurrection of the cosmic divine being. This rationale, then, logically connects in one scheme and ascribes to God the attributes of *life, soul* and *world*.

A substantially different explanation of the periodical contraction of God is offered by JACOBI'S interpretative comment on LESSING'S statement, in JACOBI'S letter to HERDER of 30 June 1784 (№ 1052).²⁹¹ In his 6 February 1784 letter (№ 992), namely, HERDER asked JACOBI for clarification on LESSING'S idea concerning the contraction of God,²⁹² as HERDER could informally read JACOBI'S account of the SPINOZA-conversations in manuscript. HERDER'S letter attests to his deep philosophical sensibility for, and intimate understanding of, Spinozism seen from the perspective of the concept of God'S absolute omnipresence within the physical world, criticizes JACOBI'S idea of an extramundane God,²⁹³ but rejects the notion

²⁹⁰“*Der organische Umfang derselben (scil. der Weltseele) könnte aber nach der Analogie der organischen Theile dieses Umfanges in so ferne nicht gedacht werden, als er sich auf nichts, das ausser ihm vorhanden wäre, beziehen, von ihm nehmen und ihm wiedergeben könnte. Also, um sich im Leben zu erhalten, müßte er, von Zeit zu Zeit, sich in sich selbst gewissermassen zurückziehen; Tod und Auferstehung, mit dem Leben, in sich vereinigen.*” (*Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza*, GA, *Werke*, vol. I/1, pp. 32–33. Transl. by G. VALLÉE et al., p. 97, bold characters by JACOBI.)

²⁹¹Numbering according to GA, *Briefwechsel*, vol. 3, where letter № 1052 is in pp. 325–329.

²⁹²Cf. “*Also bitte ich Sie inständig, lieber Jacobi 1) laßen Sie mir doch Ihre für mich äußerst interessante Unterredung mit Lessing (...) abschreiben u. schreiben Sie mir doch recht viel von dem närrischen Zeuge (...) das Ihnen noch etwa beifällt. Ich bitte deßwegen sehr darum, weil ich eigentlich Lessings Idee von der Contraction Gottes im Individuum einer Erscheinung (cf. LESSING'S statements that he himself is the contracted God) noch nicht begreife, oder eigentlich das Gesetz dieser Expansion u. Contraction noch nicht einsehe.*” (GA, *Briefwechsel*, vol. 3, p. 280; roman characters added by the editors of the letter.)

²⁹³HERDER: “*Was Ihr, lieben Leute, mit dem: außer der Welt existiren wollt, begreife ich nicht; existirt Gott nicht in der Welt, überall in der Welt, u. zwar überall ungemessen, ganz u. untheilbar, (denn die ganze Welt ist nur eine Erscheinung seiner Größe für uns erscheinende Gestalten) so existirt er nirgend.*” (*Ibid.*, pp. 280–281; spaced characters by HERDER.)

of the *Weltseele* alike, arguing that the world as it appears to God cannot have a corporeal character (and that, we may add, if the world is incorporeal for God, then God cannot be conceived as its *soul*; cf. Section 14).²⁹⁴

JACOBI in his answer proffered a different Lessingian rationale for the cyclic contractions of God, from the physiological one we have seen above. Like in a passage of the *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza*,²⁹⁵ he reports that LESSING could not philosophically tolerate the idea of an *extramundane* God, since a God so conceived is bereft of all but mental-logical operation and may not externalize or manifest its infinite powers by inspiring organic life into the indefinitely numerous forms of the natural world. This is very probably what we have to think of when we hear LESSING complain of a certain *taedium Dei*, as JACOBI reports that:

*In this vein, Lessing said, e.g., the following: In His expanded condition, all is centralized in the essence of God, all becomes one. Being bored, God contracts Himself then and the multiplicity of individual things comes to be. Because of this, God Himself gets into a condition which we could compare to being asleep. But since the primordial force (in Him) is expansive, it gradually gets the upper hand over the contractive force. This leads to a new, differently modified expansion, which is followed by a new kind of contraction, and so on. Hence, you can see that Creation does not last very long; it is the Infinite One, dreaming.*²⁹⁶

While this account does not conceive of God as the world soul, it is clearly a second version of LESSING'S theory of the contraction of God, with, as a novelty, the idea that the shrinking, or condensation, of the extended spiritual substance of God, whereby the One will emerge as Many, might be considered as a kind of sleep. In this condition of the divine substance, the multitude of the individual things comes to be. Although JACOBI does not point it out, this is an almost literal adoption of an idea to be found in a familiar 'Cabbalistic' text, published by VON ROSENROTH in the *Kabbala denudata: H. MORE'S Fundamenta Philosophiae sive Cabbalae Aëto-paëdo-melissaeae* (vol. I, second part, pp. 293–307).

²⁹⁴ HERDER: "Das Bild: »Seele der Welt« ist wie alle Gleichnisse mangelhaft, denn für Gott ist die Welt nicht Körper, sondern ganz Seele. Hätte unsre Seele die Klarheit des Begriffs von sich u. von ihrem Leibe, die Gott hat: so wäre sie so weit, daß der Körper nicht mehr für sie, grober Körper, sondern sie selbst sei ..." (*Ibid.*, p. 281.)

²⁹⁵ Cf. "Mit der Idee eines persönlichen schlechterdings unendlichen Wesens, in dem unveränderlichen Genusse seiner allerhöchsten Vollkommenheit, konnte sich Lessing nicht vertragen. Er verknüpfte mit derselben eine solche Vorstellung von unendlicher Langerweile, daß ihm angst und weh dabey wurde." (The second paragraph following the one on God conceived as the *Weltseele*; GA, *Werke*, vol. I/1, p. 34.)

²⁹⁶ "So sagte Lessing z. B.: In dem Zustande der Expansion wird im Wesen Gottes Alles central, Alles ist nur Eins. Aus langer Weile zieht sich Gott alsdann zusammen, und es entsteht die Menge der Individuen, worüber er selbst in einen Zustand geräth, den man mit einem Schläfe vergleichen könnte. Da aber die Urkraft expansiv ist; so überwindet sie allmählig die Contraction, und es tritt eine neue, anders modificirte Expansion ein, hierauf wieder eine anders modificirte Contraction, u.s.w. Sie sehen also, daß die Schöpfung eine bloße Kurzweil ist; der Unendliche im Traume." (GA, *Briefwechsel*, vol. 3, p. 327. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

When we realize the almost perfect philosophical identity of the ideas of LESSING and those put forward by MORE, it is almost impossible to believe that JACOBI happened to name MORE by chance when he was listening to LESSING'S Cabbalistic argumentation just before LESSING made his statement about God as the world soul.²⁹⁷ In MORE'S strangely-titled text (*"The Fundamentals of the Philosophy or Cabbala, of the Eagle-Child-Bee"*),²⁹⁸ which is accompanied by a detailed *confutatio* and important *scholia* by the same author, we find a systematic exposition of what MORE believed to be the metaphysical principles of one strand of the newer Cabbala. These 16 principles are a hypothetical reconstruction of a metaphysical system MORE, himself, in no way accepts.²⁹⁹ MORE'S negative philosophical attitude is expressed by the title of his text. As he explains in the *Scholia*,³⁰⁰ once he had a vision in which the symbolic image of the newer Jewish Cabbala³⁰¹ appeared to be like a mighty eagle (*ἀετός*) from a certain distance, but when it was confronted with some fundamental articles of the Christian creed, it looked like a child (*παῖς*), i.e., it was left speechless, while, ultimately, it was reduced to a disturbing unimportant phenomenon: a bee (*μέλισσα*) only.³⁰²

MORE'S philosophical reconstruction of the newer Jewish Cabbala consists mainly of the following principles:

Principle 1. Nothing can be created out of nothing. 2. Hence, it is likewise impossible to create matter out of nothing. 3. On the other hand, matter cannot exist by itself either, because it is a vile thing. ... 4. Hence, there is no such thing in nature as matter. 5.

²⁹⁷ Cf. the paragraph of *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza* immediately preceding the one in which LESSING'S statement on the world soul is cited (see our [Section 11](#)).

²⁹⁸ Full title "*Fundamenta philosophiae Sive Cabbalae Aëto-paedo-melissaeae, Quae omnem Creationem proprie dictam negat, Essentiamque supponit Divinam quasi Corporeo-Spiritualem, Mundumque Materialem aliquo modo Spiritum. Cum brevi ac luculenta praedictorum Fundamentorum Confutatione.*" BUDDÉ qualifies this as a '*titulus qui obscurus & singularis multis videri posset*' (BUDDÉ 1702, p. 230).

²⁹⁹ Cf. W. SCHRÖDER'S position on this text: "*MORE hatte in seiner »Cabbala-aeto-paedo-melissaeae« lediglich die Darstellung einer bestimmten Richtung der Kabbala (...) geben wollen. Diese mit der jüdischen Mystik überhaupt gleichzusetzen, hatte er um so weniger im Sinn, als er selbst kabbalistische Spekulationen gegen die mechanistische Naturphilosophie eines Descartes fruchtbar zu machen suchte. Sein Entwurf des Schreckbildes einer pantheistischen Kabbala will, statt diese in toto zu diffamieren, in erster Linie vor Augen zu führen, welche absurde Konsequenzen aus der Leugnung der Schöpfung aus dem Nichts folgen (...).*" (SCHRÖDER 1987, p. 78, n. 280.)

³⁰⁰ Pages 299–302 in vol. I, part two of the *Kabbala denudata*.

³⁰¹ We know that MORE especially took aim at the newer Jewish Cabbala because he specifies (*ibid.*, p. 300) that at the time of his vision, he had been reading Naphthali BACHARACH'S *Emek ha-Melekh* ("*Vallis Regia*", 1648, cf. footnote at the end of [Section 11](#)), a synthesis of Lurianic Cabbala. MORE makes it clear, however, that he does appreciate certain doctrines of the older Jewish Cabbala.

³⁰² Cf. MORE'S explanation of his vision: "*Quod vero Aquila major appareret a longinquo, quam cum propinqua esset tandemque ab Aquila in Apem abiret, prope humum bombilantem, satis aperte innuebat Judaicam Cabbalam multo majora ac sublimiora primo aspectu promittere, quam revera praestat in exitu.*" (*Ibid.*, p. 301; roman characters by MORE.)

Whatever there is, is spirit. 6. This Spirit is uncreated and eternal, intellectual, sentient, life-giving, mobile by itself, infinite in point of extension, and necessarily existing by itself. 7. Therefore, this Spirit is, indeed, the divine essence. 8. It is impossible that besides the divine essence, any other essence may exist by itself. 9. Since there is absolutely no essence besides the divine essence in this universe ..., and since it is manifest that some part of this unique divine essence actually divides, it is evident that the divine essence is divisible. 10. But since it is the divine essence, its individual particles are also infinite. Further, it is evident that these particles can extend into orbs of infinite power and extension. 11. And since the individual grains of sand, small parts of stones, particles of air and aether, and so on, are parts of this divine essence, it is equally manifest that the parts of the divine essence can be contracted and restricted into these minute things. 12. It is from these contracted parts that the so-called material world is formed, though it is, in actual fact, spiritual, in so far as it consists of divided spirits, i.e., the particles of the divine essence, which have contracted and coagulated into monades or physical points. 13. For these divine particles, this contraction is a condition of being asleep, whereas their expansion is a condition of being awake. 14. Their wakefulness has several different degrees, namely, those of the vegetative, sentient, and rational life, respectively ... moreover, by virtue of their awakening and expansion, they become, at length, an almost infinite orb in point of extension and power, so that an individual divine particle, i.e., a particular divine spirit will be able to produce a world for itself, a world which consists of earth, water, skies and all the other parts. 15. Likewise, this particular spirit may become, from a tiny piece of, say, marble, a plant, from this plant, an animal, from this animal, a human being, from the human being, an angel, and finally, from the angel, a God, the creator of a new earth and a new heaven.³⁰³

³⁰³“*Fundamentum 1. Ex nihilo nihil posse creari. 2. Ac proinde nec materiam creari posse. 3. Nec ob vilitatem naturae suae a se existere. ... 4. Nullam igitur Materiam esse in rerum natura. 5. Quicquid vero est, Spiritum esse. 6. Spiritum autem hunc increatum esse, & aeternum intellectualem, sensibilem, vitalem, per se moventem, infinitum amplitudine & a se necessario existentem. 7. Ac proinde Spiritum hunc revera esse Essentiam Divinam. 8. Nec ullam Essentiam praeter Divinam a se existere posse. 9. Cum vero nulla omnino sit essentia praeter hanc in rerum Universitate ..., & manifestum sit aliquam ex Essentia hac unica, actu dividi, palam esse, Essentiam Divinam dividi posse. 10. Cum vero Essentia Divina sit, singulae particulae infinitas esse, & in orbis infinitae virtutis & amplitudinis posse extendi expandive. 11. Et vero cum singulae arenulae, lapidumve granulae particulaeque Aëris, Aetheris, &c. sint partes hujus Divinae Essentiae, aequè manifestum esse, quod (singulae particulae Divinae Essentiae) in minutissimas has partes possint contrahi & constringi. 12. Ex contractis his partibus constare Mundum, qui vocatur, Materialem, cum revera adhuc Spiritualem sit, constans utique ex divisis Spiritibus, particulisve Divinae Essentiae, in Monadas Punctave Physica contractis & constipatis. 13. Contractionem hanc esse statum somni seu Soporosis, Divinis his particulis, Expansionem vero statum Evigilationis. 14. Evigilationis vero gradus esse vario{s}, videlicet in vitam Vegetativam, Sensitivam, Rationalem ...; immo tandem Evigilationem fieri & expansionem in infinitum fere amplitudinis & virtutis Orbem, adeo ut haec Divina particula Spiritusve particularis Mundum sibi fabricare possit ex terra, aqua, coelo, caeterisque partibus consistentem. 15. Ac proinde particularem hunc Spiritum e pulvisculo puta marmoris fieri posse Plantam, e Planta brutum, e bruto Hominem, ex Homine Angelum, ex Angelo denique novae Terrae, Coelique Creatorem DEUM.” (Ibid., pp. 293–294. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, roman characters, capitals and small capitals by MORE, underlining added = MORE: *Opera omnia*, vol. II/1, p. 523; see MORE in bibliography.) The emendation in point 14 is grammatically necessary, the emended version is also the reading of the *Opera omnia*.*

It should take a separate investigation to find out if Lurian theosophy and Herreran metaphysics are really reducible to these principles (which hardly seems to be the case), but our task here is, rather, to present the philosophical analogy between LESSING'S statements on the contractions of God and the Cabbalistic principles as reconstructed by MORE. On the whole, LESSING'S idea, put differently in different contexts, seems to be that God (whether conceived as the soul of the cosmic divine being or as the entire cosmic divine being itself) periodically contracts Himself, and that this cosmic contraction brings about either the collapse of the universe (which is the death of God as the soul of the cosmic living being), or the emergence of the finite individual living beings (when God is not seen as the soul of the world). Thus, LESSING seems to have considered two alternative interpretations of the doctrine of the cosmogonical pulsation of God: (a) that the entire world is a *single* individual with God as its soul; and (b) that the world is a *mass* of individuals, each of them being a part of the divine substance. MORE'S (questionable) reconstruction of the metaphysical principles of the newer Jewish Cabbala seems to have played a significant role in the formation of alternative (b) of LESSING'S idea (God *not* conceived as the soul of the universal individual). If the infinitely extended spiritual substance of God is thought to be actually divisible into infinitely extended parts, and these parts to have a capacity of infinite contraction and expansion (cf. princ. 10), then, since there exists only spiritual substance in the universe, one might hypothetically assert the material world to be constituted by contracted bits of the divine spiritual substance (princ. 12). If we now qualify this condition of God as '*a condition of being asleep*' ('*status somni seu soporis*', princ. 13), then we have arrived at precisely LESSING'S idea of creation ("*die Schöpfung*") conceived as "*the Infinite One, dreaming*" ("*der Unendliche im Traume*"), according to JACOBI'S letter to HERDER. This *sopor Dei*, sleep of God, is the condition of the divine substance in which the individuals emerge ("*es entsteht die Menge der Individuen*") as condensed and congealed parts of that substance – there is a very far-reaching philosophical concord between LESSING and (the ironical) MORE here.

This (pseudo-)Cabbalistic conclusion about the infinite contraction and expansion of *parts* of the divine substance may possibly serve also as the hermeneutical horizon in which to interpret LESSING'S strange statement, cited in the text of *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza*, that "*perhaps he himself was the Highest Being, present in the state of extreme contraction.*"³⁰⁴ We seem entitled to establish a philosophical connection between MORE and LESSING here by virtue of JACOBI'S account, which continues with: "*I pleaded for my life. He answered that I had nothing to worry about and explained his thoughts in a way that reminded me of Henry More and F. Mercurius van Helmont.*"³⁰⁵ As LESSING here affirms that JACOBI "*had nothing to worry about*" ("*es wäre nicht allerdings so gemeint*"), there is some reason to believe that what

³⁰⁴ "*Er selbst wäre vielleicht das Höchste Wesen, und gegenwärtig in dem Zustande der äussersten Contraction.*" (GA, *Werke*, vol. I/1, p. 31. Transl. by G. VALLÉE et al., p. 96.)

³⁰⁵ "*Ich bat um meine Existenz. – Er antwortete, es wäre nicht allerdings so gemeint, und erklärte sich auf eine Weise, die mich an Heinrich Morus und von Helmont erinnerte.*" (GA, *Werke*, vol. I/1, p. 31. Transl. by G. VALLÉE et al., pp. 96–97.)

LESSING jocularly identified himself with in this case was not God as the one indivisible, absolutely infinite being, but a contracted piece of the infinitely extended spiritual substance of God, in the sense in which MORE proposed this concept as a (pseudo-)Cabbalistic idea. Principle 15 of the *Fundamenta Philosophiae sive Cabbalae* ... makes it possible to think that a temporarily separated and condensed particle of the infinite spiritual substance of God may contract (and thereby go down the ontological scale, toward the grade of unconscious matter), as well as expand (and thereby acquire an ever higher degree of consciousness and potency). As parts of the absolute actual infinite are also considered, in the *Fundamenta*, to be capable of infinite expansion, it will be, in principle, thinkable that indefinitely numerous secondary divinities come to be in this manner (MORE may be relying on the doctrine of the *Sephiroth* here), each of which manifests a facet of, but none of which is exhaustively identical with, the absolute actual infinite, the *En-Soph*. LESSING's statement that "*Er selbst wäre vielleicht das Höchste Wesen, und gegenwärtig in dem Zustande der äussersten Contraction*" thus may be understood as the expression of not a solipsistic, but a (pseudo-)Cabbalistic position, from the perspective of which parts of the physical world may take on the aspect of subordinate creative divinities ("*esse posse Deos Terrarum Coelorumque Creatores*").

Further, it is interesting to point out in the context of the present investigation that MORE, in *The Immortality of the Soul* (1659)³⁰⁶ developed a theory about a created incorporeal immaterial and all-pervasive *spiritus universalis* or Spirit of Nature (occasionally also called by MORE as the "*Universal Soul of the World*",³⁰⁷ or "*Universalis Anima Mundi seu Spiritus Naturae*"³⁰⁸) subordinate to God.

³⁰⁶ Full title: "*The Immortality of the Soul, So farre forth as it is demonstrable from the Knowledge of Nature and the Light of Reason*" (second, revised edition 1662; see JACOB ed., 1987, in our bibliography). A (somewhat enlarged) Latin version, entitled *Immortalitas animae*, came out in the *Opera omnia*, vol. II/2, 1679.

³⁰⁷ We cite MORE's definition of the "*Spirit of Nature*" from the second English edition: "*The Spirit of Nature therefore, according to that notion I have of it, is, A substance incorporeal, but without Sense and Animadversion, pervading the whole Matter of the Universe, and exercising a Plastical power therein according to the sundry predispositions and occasions in the parts it works upon, raising such Phaenomena in the World, by directing the parts of the Matter and their Motion, as cannot be resolved into mere Mechanical powers.*" (Book three, ch. XII, point 1 of *The Immortality of the Soul*; JACOB ed., p. 254.) MORE calls this universal *spirit* a universal *soul* in the same chapter, point 5 (underlining added in the citation in our main text, above; p. 257 in JACOB ed.). Cf. also *ibid.*, point 2, *ad fin.*: "*Whence I would conclude also, that there is some such Principle as we call The Spirit of Nature, or the inferiour Soul of the World ...*" (Roman characters by MORE; *ibid.*, p. 255.) In respect of biological function, this concept anticipates those of SCHELLING and BAADER, respectively, of the *Weltseele* or universal soul, an essential difference being the attribute of immateriality in MORE's concept (see also following footnotes).

³⁰⁸ MORE's definition of the "*Spiritus Naturae*" in the Latin version (*Immortalitas animae*) of *The Immortality of the Soul* reads as follows: "*Spiritus naturae, ut ego intelligo, est substantia incorporea sensus ac animadversionis expers, materiam Universi totam pervadens, & vim plasticam in ea exercens pro variis praeparationibus occasionibusque partium earum in quas agit, ea item excitans Phaenomena in Mundo, partes materiae motumque earum dirigendo, quae in mechanicas potentias solas resolvī nequeant.*" (*Liber III, cap. XII, point 1*; MORE, vol. II/2, p. 430. Roman characters by MORE.) In point 5 of the same chapter, MORE uses the expression "*Universalis Anima Mundi seu Spiritus Naturae*" to designate this entity (*ibid.*, p. 431).

With this theory, MORE wanted non-mechanistically (i.e., non-Cartesianistically) to account for the plastic powers of nature operating in the organization of living matter.³⁰⁹ Hence, JACOBI could refer to MORE also on account of MORE'S conception of the world soul (or universal spirit), in view of LESSING'S statement on the same, cited subsequently in JACOBI'S text.

The Christian Cabbalistic text *Seder Olam* (1693, see Section 11) may have contributed to LESSING'S idea of the cosmogonical pulsations of God conceived as the world soul by suggesting the cosmological idea that the physical world is periodically annihilated. Essentially, VAN HELMONT propounds here a theory of the return of human souls to carnal bodies as many times as is necessary for them to achieve moral perfection (“*doctrina haec de Reditu animarum post mortem, ut denuo vivant & nascantur in corpore carnis*”).³¹⁰ This idea is part of a broader metaphysical conception about the parallel existence of four, substantially different kinds of worlds (*mundorum pluralitas*),³¹¹ and about the chronological succession, i.e., the regular, periodical coming-into-being and perishing-in-fire, of the lowest, i.e., the visible physical world (*mundorum successio*).³¹² In particular, says VAN HELMONT, the hierarchically first world, nearest in ontological character, by the purity of its spiritual substance, to the *En-Soph*, is an *emanation* (*Aziluth*) from God. This emanation must be correlated with the *Adamus caelestis* (the *Adam Kadmon* of the Cabbala) that is, for VAN HELMONT, with the Christ, whereby the ontologically highest world will appear as the impenetrable sphere of the transcendent divinity within the fourfold cosmological scheme of the universe:

43. Furthermore, the Hebrews recognize that there is, even beyond the world of Briah (scil. the created world), which is the uppermost limit of our origin (...), another, nobler world, which is prior to the rest in the order of nature and which emanates immediately from God. Therefore, they call this world that of emanation, which is, in Hebrew, *Aziluth*. The name means that this world comes the nearest to the supreme and perfectly good God Himself. Hence, it may be attributed to Christ the Saviour only, who is the mediator between God and man.

³⁰⁹MORE substantially modified his concept of a ‘universal spirit’ in his *Coneiectura cabbalistica*, second part: *Cabbala philosophica*, cap. I, §§ 8–9, where he suggests that this ‘*spiritus universalis*’ is material and that it takes the form of subtle aether: “8. *Quamobrem Materia haec actuata est continuo & agitata illius virtute qui eam fecit subjecitque regimini ac moderamini Spiritus cujuspiam Universalis, qui pars tamen esset Mundi Vitae, & in subtilis Aetheris consistentiam formata est; ut recte haec Materia appellanda sit Coelum ...* 9. *Narrabo porro vobis, quomodo Deus Terram Materialem realem disponat (quae Materia Aetherea quae Coelum appellatur, semper undique cingitur)...*” (Roman characters by MORE; MORE, vol. II/2, p. 479.)

³¹⁰*Seder Olam*, point 72, p. 73 (numeration of points starts all over again from 1, on p. 45!). For an online copy of the text, visit <http://vd17.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/pict/2006/3:608642D/> (last viewed in 2007).

³¹¹The four kinds of worlds are the *mundus emanationis*, the *mundus creationis*, the *mundus formationis* and the *mundus factionis*, as van HELMONT explains, e.g., in points 38–40 (pp. 11–13; cf. point 43, cited above). SCHOLEM contends that “*the doctrine of four worlds placed between the En-Sof and our earthly cosmos*” derives from the sixteenth-century Galilean Cabbalists M. CORDOVERO and I. LURIA, while “*no trace* (of this doctrine) *is to be found in the major part of the Zohar*” (SCHOLEM 1971, p. 272). SCHOLEM'S thesis, however, seems slightly questionable in the light of *Zohar I* (*B^rreshith*), fol. 57b, where we learn that beneath God'S supernal world, there are three lower worlds (or at least levels of existence), which are all irradiated by the divine ‘spirit of life’. It is in any case true that as a rule, the *B^rreshith* distinguishes only between the *supernal* world of the Godhead (which includes the Sephiroth), and the *inferior* world (which is our visible and corporeal world).

³¹²Cf. *ibid.*, point 74, p. 25.

44. Therefore, the Hebrew sages teach rightly and perfectly in harmony with the testimony of Scripture that the four afore-mentioned worlds exist, namely, the world of Aziluth, which belongs to the Christ; that of Briah, which belongs to the souls; that of Jezirah, which belongs to the as yet imperfect angels, and that of Asiah (scil. the world of making, Hebr. asiah), which belongs to human beings clothed in an external body. ...

45. ... Finally, the world of Aziluth not only irradiates, pervades, and penetrates the three inferior worlds with its creative and life-giving rays but also intimately embraces them in its bosom, like a mother does her child. In this manner, then, all these four worlds are intimately present to each other ...³¹³

In this hierarchical scheme of the grades of being, which is apparently a Christianized version of the Cabbalistic (Lurianic, cf. Section 11) doctrine of the *Sephiroth*, Christ is represented as a person of a double (divine and human) nature, whose omnipresence and omniscience are not so absolute as those of the original source of being, the Father. Christ thus acts as a subordinate mediator between the absolutely transcendent creator, and creation.³¹⁴

Perhaps the most fundamental cosmological thesis of the entire book, which also explains the title '*ordo seculorum*', and which may, again, help us understand LESSING'S idea of a periodical collapse of God as the world soul into Himself, is the thesis of a regularly recurring *conflagratio mundi* which is supposed to take place in our visible physical 'world of making' (*mundus hic factionis*). VAN HELMONT underpins this (in ultimate origin, certainly Stoic) thesis by the postulate that the 'world of making' has to regress in order to experience moral purification, glorification, and the spiritualization of the material bodies, into the 'world of formation' (*mundus Jeziraticus*, i.e., the third grade after the *En-Soph*).³¹⁵ This postulate is corroborated by more or less scrupulous calculations (based on Scriptural hints at the age of the present world) concerning the amount of time for which the actual visible

³¹³ "43. *Quin & supra ipsum mundum Briah, quo non altius assurgit origo nostra (...)* alium mundum nobiliorem & ordine naturae caeteris priorem intelligunt (scil. Hebraei) ab ipso DEO autore immediate emanantem, quem ideo mundum emanationis appellant, Hebraice autem Aziluth eum vocant, quod ipsi DEO summo & optimo proximum significat; et hoc nulli alii quam Christo salvatori & mediatori inter DEUM & homines convenire potest. 44. Recte igitur & omnino secundum scripturae testimonium docent Hebraei illi doctores quatuor existere illos mundos praedictos, nempe Aziluthicum, qui Christi est; Briaticum, qui animarum est, Jeziraticum, qui angelorum est nondum consummatorum & Asiaticum, qui hominum est externo corpore vestitorum. ... 45. ... Et denique mundus Aziluthicus omnes tres inferiores mundos radiis quoque suis essentialibus & vitalibus non tantum perfundit, permeat, & penetrat, sed sinu quoque suo, ut mater prolem, quam intime complectitur. Et sic quidem omnes hi quatuor mundi, sibi invicem quam intime praesentes sunt ..." (*Ibid.*, pp. 14–15. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

³¹⁴ For the restricted character of Christ's omnipresence and omniscience, see in especial points 19–21 (p. 6). On Christ as a '*medium aut essentia media*', see point 23 (p. 7). The Holy Spirit seems altogether neglected in VAN HELMONT'S theology. The *Sephiroth* are only shortly mentioned as '*decem emanationes*' in point 44 (p. 15).

³¹⁵ "51. *Mundus ergo hic Asiaticus retro convertendus est & redeundus in mundum Jeziraticum superiorem & optimum, ut partes ejus universae readunentur animabus pristinis, ad quas olim pertinebant ...* 52. *Et tum quidem corpus naturale aut animale convertetur in spirituale, quod longe nobilius est, immo totus hic mundus materialis & crassus, ubi mors & stupor mire regnant, spiritualis, vitae & spiritu plenus efformabitur.*" (*Ibid.*, p. 18.)

world may continue to exist. On the basis of such considerations, VAN HELMONT then asserts that the hierarchically lowest, most material and least spiritual world is regularly (every seven thousand years) consumed by fire:

76. Hence, after the end of this world, a new world will be prepared, in which the procreation and multiplication of the human race will advance in the same manner as in our present world. This means that even before this world, there existed another world, in which the human race propagated by successive generations. ...

77. Further, from the conflagration of this world, a future world is going to emerge, which will come to light, as it were, from the ashes of the present world. In the same manner, the present world has emerged from the ashes of the previous world after its conflagration ... Thus, the destruction of one world is followed by the generation or construction of another, in a seamless order.³¹⁶

While it is a fact that there is no question about identifying God with the universal soul, or about a universal soul at all, in VAN HELMONT'S text, still it is true that his *Seder Olam*, a well-known book in eighteenth-century Germany, proposed, by a specific mixture of Cabbalistic and Christian (as well as, we believe, Stoic) ideas, a complex hypothesis of the periodical annihilation and regeneration of the visible world.³¹⁷ LESSING certainly knew about VAN HELMONT'S book once JACOBI, in the context of their conversation, referred to VAN HELMONT by name. So the *Seder Olam* is a source that offered a Christianized version of the idea of a *periodical annihilation* (or collapse into itself) of the world, which LESSING might have applied to his concept of God as the soul of the cosmic living being. Hence, while the idea of a periodical conflagration of the visible universe is no doubt Stoic in its ultimate origin, there was a major Christian Cabbalistic source near at hand for LESSING, which rehashed that idea and fitted it into the context of the Cabbalistic cosmological–theological tradition.

We have now extensively treated the possible Cabbalistic origin of LESSING'S idea of the shrinking and spreading movement of God as the world soul, or as the world itself. We have seen how the concept of the *contractio Dei* historically derives from such primary sources as the *Zohar*, Lurianic Cabbala, and HERRERA'S systematic elaboration of the latter, and how it was critically received, and to some extent reinterpreted, by the Christian Cabbalist luminaries H. MORE and VAN HELMONT. At this

³¹⁶ “76. Post finem igitur hujus mundi alius mundus instruetur, in quo humani generis propagatio & multiplicatio procedet ut in mundo praesente, & ideo quoque ante hunc mundum alius olim extitit mundus, in quo humani generis propagatio per generationes successivas facta est. ... 77. Porro sicut ex conflagratione hujus mundi orietur mundus futurus, qui veluti ex cineribus mundi praesentis eruetur; ita ex cineribus mundi praeteriti, post factam istius conflagrationem erutus ... est hic mundus; Et sic quidem ordine continuo destructionem unius mundi sequitur generatio aut fabricatio alterius.” (P. 26; transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

³¹⁷ VAN HELMONT'S ideas also bear a degree of resemblance to some fundamental theses of Spinozan metaphysics, as van HELMONT argues for a reality which is spiritual and material at the same time, taking a position that might be qualified as pananimistic, cf. “30. Porro, sicut omnis Spiritus aut Anima in totius Creaturae universitate corpus est, veram in se habens corporis essentiam & attributa, ita corpus omne in aliquo modo aut gradu, animale est & spirituale, vitam & sensum ac cognitionem habens aut saltem eorundem attributorum capax.” (P. 9; cf. also points 27–33 in general, pp. 8–10.)

point, then, we may remember that LESSING's only proposition about God conceived as the universal soul qualified the two phases (contraction and expansion) of the cosmogonical pulsation of God as the 'death and resurrection' of God. According to JACOBI, LESSING said: "*Therefore, in order to continue to exist at all, it (scil. God as the world soul) would have to retire, so to speak, into itself from time to time; it would have to unite within itself life, death, and resurrection.*"³¹⁸ While the idea of the (repetitive) contractions of God is, as we have seen, a pivotal Jewish Cabbalistic conviction, it is clear that death, resurrection and life (*Tod, Auferstehung* and *Leben*) are, on the contrary, some key terms of Christology. So a Jewish Cabbalistic concept is qualified with Christian theological technical terms in LESSING's statement. This circumstance, in fact, will not surprise us with the author of *Nathan der Weise*, but it can make us more aware of the syncretic character of his thought.

A last difficulty, then, in the way of a philosophical interpretation of LESSING's idea of God conceived as the world soul is how we are to understand the expression '*persönliche Gottheit*' in the formulation of his hypothesis? The wording of JACOBI's account reveals that, here, we have to conceive God simultaneously to be a *person* as well as the *soul of the world*, or, better, to be a person, and precisely therefore also the soul of the world: "*When Lessing wanted to imagine a personal divinity, he thought of it as the soul of the universe, and he thought of the Whole as being analogous to an organic body*", says JACOBI.³¹⁹ So our interpretative question is: in what sense of the term may God as the soul of the world be called a 'person'? A careful reading of the context (see entire paragraph under Section 14) would suggest that we are confronted with a completely different conception under the heading '*persönlich*' than the one we have been accustomed to. In traditional philosophical terminology, this attribute is applied to the first efficient cause of the teleology of the finite spiritual and material universe. On the basis of the pervasive order and design perceivable in the works of nature, the first efficient cause is asserted, by virtue of the physico-theological argument, to exist, to have an infinite comprehension or intellect, infinite moral goodness, infinite willpower, and an infinite power of action. Since intellect (or the faculty of deliberation), moral responsibility, and willpower together constitute the essence of human personhood, the first efficient cause of the existence and order of nature (God) is qualified, by this argument, as a '*personal agent*'. However, this is precisely the concept of God LESSING rejects, in part because it also attributes *extramundaneity* to God, in part because it also attributes *liberty* (i.e., freely considered decision-making) to God.

Hence, the meaning of the expression '*persönliche Gottheit*' must be sought in a different intellectual region; in particular, possibly in a tradition that sees no logical contradiction in conceiving God simultaneously to be a person *as well as* the soul of the world.

³¹⁸"*Also, um sich im Leben zu erhalten, müßte er (God as the world soul), von Zeit zu Zeit, sich in sich selbst gewissermassen zurückziehen; Tod und Auferstehung, mit dem Leben, in sich vereinigen.*" (JACOBI: *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza*; GA, *Werke*, vol. 1/1, p. 33. Transl. by G. VALLÉE et al., p. 97.)

³¹⁹"*Wenn sich Lessing eine persönliche Gottheit vorstellen wollte, so dachte er sie als die Seele des Alls.*" (*Ibid.*, p. 31. Transl. by G. VALLÉE et al., p. 97, underlining added.)

LESSING, himself, may give a clue to this query, as he proposes several times an analogy between the 'personal' God conceived as the universal soul, on the one hand, and an individual living being, on the other. On this analogy, LESSING regards God as 'personal' only because he considers God to be the soul of the cosmic body (the material universe), whereby God *qua* soul will be the constitutive part of a compound substance (of the world as a living being or animal), in the same manner as human soul is part of the compound substance 'man' or the human being. LESSING would thus suggest that the substantial composition of the compound living being that is the cosmos as an *animal sapiens* is analogous with that of a human being. So the traditional sense, relying on the physico-theological argument, of the term 'personal' is certainly reduced here to denote an intramundane deity.

At this point, we advance the hypothesis that there may be a *Stoic* theological–cosmological horizon behind the qualification 'personal' of LESSING's esoterical concept of the divinity, inasmuch as classical Stoic theologians (as we have in part seen in Section 5, in connection with SENECA) perceived no logical contradiction when they conceived God alternately as (a) the entire cosmos itself, as (b) the (material) *anima* or *spiritus mundi*, and, again, as (c) a divine *person*, Iuppiter. In particular, God, in the second case (as the *anima mundi*), was thought by the Stoics to be fully rational, yet, at the same time, to be the physically omnipresent, directive and vivifying principle of the cosmos (*spiritus per omnem materiam percurrens*),³²⁰ while the world itself was seen as an *animal sapiens*, “ζῶον ἔμψυχον, νοερόν τε καὶ λογικόν”.³²¹

Hence, in classical Stoic theology we find a philosophical tradition in which the corporeal, and completely deterministic, nature of God does not exclude that He is the fullness of reason (*νοῦς, mens*); and in which God, by reason of His rationality, could be seen as a person (God the Father of all, Iuppiter), and, simultaneously, as a soul (*ψυχή, anima*). Thus, within the terminological frame of Stoic theology, the concept of God was reconcilable with the concept of a world soul and with a restricted concept of personhood, which was, first and foremost, based on the divine attribute of rationality, demonstrated a posteriori from the teleological order of the universe.

The analogy of the mature LESSING's theological thought with Stoic philosophy may be further strengthened by the Stoic idea concerning the periodical *ἐκπύρωσις*, or consumption in fire, of the world. This was part of the general Stoic eschatological

³²⁰Cf. LACTANTIUS' crisp summary of the related Stoic doctrines: “*Stoici naturam in duas partes dividunt: unam quae efficiat, alteram quae se ad faciendum tractabilem praebeat. In illa prima esse vim sentiendi, in hac materiam; nec alterum sine altero posse. Quomodo potest idem esse quod tractat et quod tractatur? Siquis dicat idem esse figulum, quod lutum, aut lutum idem esse quod figulum, nonne aperte insanire videatur? At isti uno naturae nomine duas res diversissimas comprehendunt, deum et mundum, artificem et opus, dicuntque alterum sine altero nihil posse, tanquam natura sit deus mundo permixtus. Nam interdum sic confundunt, ut sit deus ipse mens mundi et mundus sit corpus dei.*” (ARNIM ed., vol. II, part of *testimonium* № 1041; p. 307.) Cf. also PROCLOS' reflection on this part of Stoic theology: “ὁ γὰρ αὐτὸς θεὸς παρ' αὐτῷ (scil. Χρυσίππῳ) πρῶτος ὧν διήκει διὰ τοῦ κόσμου καὶ διὰ τῆς ὕλης καὶ ψυχῆ ἔστι καὶ φύσις ἀχώριστος τῶν διοικουμένων.” (*Ibid.*, part of № 1042, p. 308; underlining added.)

³²¹*Testimonium* № 110 on ZENO's physical doctrine, in ARNIM ed., vol. I, p. 32; cf. all the *testimonia* № 110–114 (*ibid.*, pp. 32–33).

theory of the ἀποκατάστασις or *innovatio/restauratio mundi*, the periodical destruction and complete re-establishment or re-institution and new beginning of the entire physical cosmos in space and time.³²² This is precisely what LESSING theorizes about in the passage concerning God as the universal soul, where his conception is also a cosmic eschatological vision.

In this historical derivation of LESSING's ideas, we have seen how God may be vested with a periodical shrinking and spreading movement (cf. Cabbala), and how God, conceived as the universal soul, may, at the same time, be regarded as a *person* (cf. Stoa). We have also seen how LESSING, in his complex analogy between God conceived as the universal soul and an organic body, set all these multifarious ideas in the perspective of the Christian doctrine about the death and resurrection (*Tod und Auferstehung*) of Christ. We only need to make a last systematic remark now.

It is appropriate here philosophically to assess the particular kind of *rationalism* toward which the mature LESSING's thought, as depicted by JACOBI, seems to have evolved. In the last lines of the first paragraph of our citation in Section 11, we hear LESSING make the methodological claim that "all (philosophical convictions) be demonstrated by way of the natural rational capacities of the mind" ("*Leßing blieb dabey: daß er sich alles »natürlich ausgebeten haben wollte«*").³²³ This methodological imperative does not seem to match, to some extent, a Cabbalistic conceptual context, since it apparently clashes with LESSING's rejection of a theology constructed on supernaturally revealed principles. The *Zohar* itself is essentially a commentary on the book of *Genesis*, a revealed text, while the works of the *Cabbala recentior* are, in large part, philosophical elaborations of fundamental, inspired theological insights of the *Zohar*. Hence, it is questionable to what extent LESSING's *own* theosophy meets the methodological requirement established by himself. Yet, this entire complex of ideas and methodological imperatives, which we may reasonably term an '*esoterical rationalism*', is, in the case of LESSING, far from being an historically unlikely phenomenon. In this respect, we may call to mind that the same kind of *syncretic rather than systematic* thought about God and the (spiritual and natural) universe is displayed in the section entitled by editors as '*Eigene Religion*' or '*Religiöser Weltmythos*', of GOETHE's autobiography *Poetry and Truth (Dichtung und Wahrheit)*, where the poet describes how he as a young man constructed a private religion (essentially, a heterodox theological and cosmogonical doctrine) from elements of Neoplatonic, Hermetic, mystic, Cabbalistic, etc. traditions. Though Goethe's religious-cosmogonical account is esoterical enough, he always insists on the thoroughly *reasonable* or logical character of God's actions. Hence, here we seem to have another example of rationalized Cabbalistic esoterism, which is one degree more poetic in form than the views LESSING entertained on God conceived as

³²² Cf. *testimonia* vol. I/109 (ZENO) and vol. II/623–631 (CHRYSIPPUS, *Stoici*) in ARNIM ed. It is in reality redundant to say 'physical' nature when talking about Stoic cosmology, as the Stoics did not acknowledge immaterial spiritual substance.

³²³ JACOBI: *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza*; GA, *Werke*, vol. 1/1, p. 31. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.

the world soul, and which dates from approximately the same period (1769) as that in which JACOBI had his conversations with LESSING (1780).³²⁴

With this, we are closing our inquiry into the origins of LESSING'S concept of God considered as the world soul. LESSING'S sources of philosophical theological inspiration, as we have seen, may have been very rich and numerous; so his thought itself became, in turn, a source of inspiration for other philosophers. We shall see now how his friend, Moses MENDELSSOHN, philosophically related to the concept of the world soul in a text he composed together with LESSING.

13 MENDELSSOHN'S Rejection of the World Soul in *Pope ein Metaphysiker!* (1755), within the Frame of His Rational Theology as Propounded in the *Morgenstunden oder Vorlesungen über das Daseyn Gottes* (1785)

*In the year 1753, the Berlin Academy of Sciences made a renewed attempt to nibble away at the respect of the Leibnizian–Wolffian philosophy. It designated, as its prize question for the year 1755, the examination of the proposition “All is well”, as propounded in the ‘system’ of the English poet Alexander Pope.*³²⁵

It is with this significant ‘*Preisaufrage*’, chosen by MAUPERTUIS, then president of the Berlin Royal Academy of Sciences, that the history of *Pope ein*

³²⁴ This section is to be found at the very end of the eighth book of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. It is introduced by the following passage: “*Ich studierte fleißig die verschiedenen Meinungen, und da ich oft genug hatte sagen hören, jeder Mensch habe am Ende doch seine eigene Religion, so kam mir nichts natürlicher vor, als daß ich mir auch meine eigene bilden könne, und dieses tat ich mit vieler Behaglichkeit. Der neue Platonismus lag zum Grunde; das Hermetische, Mystische, Kabbalistische gab auch seinen Beitrag her, und so erbaute ich mir eine Welt, die seltsam genug aussah etc.*” (HA, vol. 9: *Autobiographische Schriften I*, p. 350) In the subsequent two and a half pages, GOETHE describes his ideas of creation, the fall, and salvation, according to which an eternally self-producing godhead first brought forth a mirror image of itself (the Son), together with which it ‘produced’ (‘*Hervorbringen*’) a third divine being (the Holy Spirit). The sphere of the transcendent divinity was hereby accomplished. But divine ‘production’ was bound to continue (“*der Produktionstrieb immer forting*”), so the Trinity created (“*erschufen*”) a spiritual being, Lucifer, to whom all the creative divine powers were delegated. Lucifer created the rest of the angels, but became conceited, and turned against the Trinity (‘*Abfall der Engel*’). As this revolt was essentially a *concentration* (“*Konzentration*”) of spiritual substance on itself, it ultimately yielded matter: matter is thus concentrated spiritual substance (this point is identical with thesis 12 of the *Fundamenta Philosophiae sive Cabbalae Aëto-paëdo-melissaeae*, a *résumé* of Cabbalistic doctrines compiled, and subsequently refuted, by H. MORE; see above). At this point, says GOETHE, the Trinity (“*die Elohim*”) intervened and brought about an *expansion* of what had been created so far: “*Sie gaben dem unendlichen Sein die Fähigkeit, sich auszudehnen, sich gegen sie zu bewegen ...*” As the Trinity thus instigated the created material universe to expand, creation proper took place, GOETHE explains. He next gives his rationale for the creation of man, the fall, and redemption. (Citations *ibid.*, pp. 351–352.)

³²⁵ “*Im Jahre 1753 unternahm die Berliner Akademie von neuem den Versuch, das Ansehen der Leibniz-Wolffschen Philosophie zu schwächen. Sie stellte als Preisaufrage für das Jahr 1755 die Untersuchung des im ‘System’ des englischen Dichters Alexander Pope enthaltenen Satzes »Alles ist gut.«.*” (ALTMANN, p. 184. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

Metaphysiker! (1755) begins. This text, co-authored and anonymously published by LESSING and Moses MENDELSSOHN (1729–1786) is, as is known, an ironic and at places even mocking, but also seriously philosophical answer to the question of the Academy.³²⁶ The theme of the competition was, more precisely, the interpretation of POPE's *Essay on Man*, and its possible philosophical connection with Leibnizian metaphysics, which MAUPERTUIS, the favourite scientist of FREDERIC THE GREAT, wanted to discredit.³²⁷ In their unsubmitted but published competition essay, LESSING and MENDELSSOHN set out to show, only in part successfully, that POPE is not a systematic but eclectic thinker, and that his thought is philosophically not related to Leibnizianism. In the context of our investigation, the interest of *Pope ein Metaphysiker!* is the analysis and rejection of the *Weltseele*-theory in thesis 9 of the third chapter of that text. As there is a scientific consensus that the three more strictly philosophical chapters comprising the middle part are the work of MENDELSSOHN, while LESSING composed the introduction and the sarcastic appendix,³²⁸ we examine the relevant part for us under MENDELSSOHN'S name here.

SWIFT'S friend, Alexander POPE (1688–1744), a translator of HOMER and the leading English poet of his time, published the first part of his *Essay on Man* in early 1733.³²⁹ Since it is from this part (later called 'epistle') that MENDELSSOHN cites evidence for his discussion of the *anima mundi*-theory, we offer a brief introduction only into this part, although part four is also important in a philosophical respect. The points POPE intends to make in part one are that man occupies an intermediary position in the seamless chain of beings constituting the universe, and that the human intellectual capacities are in exact proportion to man's position on that scale. Our faculty of reason is thus neither too weak, nor disproportionately potent, but exactly fitted by God to meet the duties deriving from our condition.³³⁰ The universe, for POPE, is essentially order, *cosmos*; but insofar as it is directed by *general laws*

³²⁶ At the beginning of their essay, LESSING and MENDELSSOHN cite the *Preisfrage* of the Academy in the following terms: "Die Akademie verlangt eine Untersuchung des Popischen Systems, welches in dem Satze alles ist gut enthalten ist. Und zwar so, daß man Erstlich den wahren Sinn dieses Satzes, der Hypothes (!) seines Urhebers gemäß, bestimme. Zweitens ihn mit dem System des Optimismus, oder der Wahl des Besten, genau vergleiche, und Drittens die Gründe anführe, warum dieses Popische System entweder zu behaupten oder zu verwerffen sey." (JA, vol. II, p. 46; set-out characters by LESSING and MENDELSSOHN.)

³²⁷ See ALTMANN, pp. 184–19, for a thorough historical introduction into the circumstances of the genesis of *Pope ein Metaphysiker!* Cf. also BECK, pp. 314–319, especially p. 316. LESSING unmasks MAUPERTUIS'S intention of destroying the reputation of Leibnizian philosophy especially in the *Anhang*.

³²⁸ Cf. ALTMANN, p. 194; and GÖPFERT ed., vol. 3, p. 788 (see also first part of our [Section 12](#)).

³²⁹ Cf. GRIFFITH, vol. I, pp. 211.

³³⁰ "Then say not man's imperfect, heav'n in fault; / Say rather man's as perfect as he ought: / His knowledge measured to his state and place, / His time a moment, and a point his space." (*Essay on Man*, part one, point 2, lines 69–72; ELWIN et al. eds., vol. II, p. 353.)

(and not by the *particular* volitions of God),³³¹ a limited amount of *natural* evil may take place in it without impairing the goodness of God. Analogically, says POPE, *moral* evil does not diminish God's bounty either, as "*all subsists by elemental strife*",³³² without destroying the pervasive order of the world. This is POPE's theodicy. The order of the world should not be subverted by human ambition striving after a higher degree of understanding, but each class of beings should play the role intrinsically determined by its respective nature. The principle of unity and order in the great whole, the power that constrains all beings to remain in the positions naturally assigned to them, is God conceived as the soul of the world:

*All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body nature is, and God the soul;
That, changed through all, and yet in all the same,
Great in the earth, as in th' ethereal frame,
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
Lives thro' all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent;
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
As full, as perfect in a hair as heart;
As full, as perfect in vile man that mourns,
As the rapt Seraph that adores and burns:
To him no high, no low, no great, no small;
He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all.*³³³

POPE, here, propounds a version of the classic *anima mundi*-theory in that he sees the material frame of the world as the *body* of one cosmic divine being, and God as its *soul*. God, as a universal spiritual substrate, undergoes local modifications in the individual living beings, and is the internal substantial form of the individuals, but remains numerically one and the same in point of substance. God is omnipresent, His *entire* substance is present in every point of physical space, and yet, He is indivisible as a substance. Further, God, as the soul of the world, is the principle of life

³³¹ As MENDELSSOHN remarks several times, POPE's theodicy seems in large part inspired by MALEBRANCHE's rational theological idea in *Traité de la nature et de la grace* that God, in order to implement His will, applies, instead of particular volitions, the most general laws of nature which achieve the most perfect results in the simplest ways. The simplicity of the laws follows from the simplicity and perfect rationality of the divine nature, but may occasionally result in natural evil (cf. §§ XIII–XXIII in MALEBRANCHE's *Traité*; and our Section 1 of Chapter 3).

³³² *Ibid.*, part one, point 5, line 169; ELWIN et al. eds., vol. II, p. 361.

³³³ *Ibid.*, part one, point 9, lines 267–280; ELWIN et al. eds., vol. II, p. 369.

in all that is alive, as well as the principle of the substantial unity of the world as a whole ('He connects all').³³⁴

MENDELSSOHN, in his criticism of POPE's metaphysics ("Dritter Abschnitt: Prüfung der Popischen Sätze"), denies, on treacherous argumentative ground,³³⁵ POPE's fundamental principle that there is a seamless scale of being which rises from nothingness, through the indefinitely numerous forms of inorganic and organic existence, to the absolute perfection of God ('eine allmälige Degradation der Vollkommenheit'). He believes to discover a self-contradiction in POPE's theology (sixth thesis). It is in the course of this argument, under thesis 9, that MENDELSSOHN occasionally comes to the discussion of the *anima mundi*-theory, as he contends that the interpretation of POPE's doctrine is difficult because it contradicts all known systems. Such a contradiction to any other system, as well as to POPE's own system, would be the world soul theory as well, according to MENDELSSOHN's presentation. MENDELSSOHN, in his short analysis of this theory, points out that it is incompatible with Spinozism, and that it is erroneous:

It is absolutely impossible to reconcile it (POPE's theory of God as the world soul) with Spinoza's doctrine. Spinoza could never have said the words »Whose body Nature is, and God the soul«, ... in so far as the terms 'body' and 'soul' seem to suggest, at least, that God and Nature are two different things. This is very far from being Spinoza's opinion! There have been, however, other misguided philosophers who really took God for the Soul of Nature, and who are just as far removed from Spinozism as from the truth. Supposing that Pope borrowed these strange expressions from them, how do we explain the words »Extends thro' all extent«? ... This doctrine can not belong to anybody else but Spinoza. Who else but this celebrated dupe has identified the extension of nature as a property of God? ... This is why he (POPE) did not hesitate to discuss the omnipresence of God partly in Spinozistic terms, partly in the language of those who regard God as the Soul of the World ...³³⁶

³³⁴ Despite his concept of God as the world soul in *Essay on Man*, POPE says in a letter (1 September 1742) to RACINE that "I must avow then openly and sincerely, that my principles are diametrically opposite to the sentiments of Spinoza and Leibnitz; they are perfectly coincident with the tenets of M. Paschal, and the Archbishop of Cambray (i.e., FÉNELON)" (POPE, vol. II, p. 233). POPE hereby sides with the mystical tradition in religion, and suggests that his position in *Essay on Man* is metaphorical.

³³⁵ To believe MENDELSSOHN, a gradual scale of being is not perceivable in the universe, as the several different grades of being are not present in it in an orderly manner (cf. chapter three, second thesis, JA vol. II, p. 67; cf. also chapter two, *Zweyter Satz*, JA vol. II, pp. 62–63). But POPE does not mean either that the universe conspicuously displays an external order perfectly corresponding to the gradations of the ontological scale. It is interesting to point out that MENDELSSOHN himself, in the later *Morgenstunden*, put forward a very similar if not identical thesis about the ontological gradations of ectypal reality (see second citation from the *Morgenstunden* below, in our main text). LESSING entertained practically the same onto-theological view in his early *Das Christenthum der Vernunft* (1753), §§ 4, 13, 16 (see our Section 12).

³³⁶ "Durchgehends kann sie unmöglich mit Spinosens Lehren bestehen. Die Worte Whose body Nature is, and God the soul, ... würde Spinoza nimmermehr haben sagen können; denn der Ausdruck, Seele und Körper, scheint doch wenigstens anzudeuten, daß Gott und die Natur zwey verschiedne Wesen sind. Wie wenig war dieses die Meinung des Spinoza! Es hat aber andere irrige Weltweisen gegeben, die Gott wirklich für die Seele der Natur gehalten haben, und die vom

As far as the philosophical evaluation of the *Weltseele*-theory is concerned, MENDELSSOHN'S argument breaks down into two major theses: (a) that it is not related to historical Spinozism; and (b) that it is erroneous. We can reconstruct MENDELSSOHN'S explanation of the philosophical difference between the *Weltseele*-theory and Spinozism on the basis of the above citation; but we have to go to the *Morning Hours or, Lectures on the Existence of God (Morgenstunden oder Vorlesungen über das Daseyn Gottes)* in order to see the philosophical context of the second thesis.

MENDELSSOHN correctly argues that the *Weltseele*-theory is philosophically incompatible with Spinozism as a metaphysical system when he points out that in POPE'S poem, 'Nature' and 'God' apparently denote two different essences or entities (*Wesen*), whereas SPINOZA identifies these terms.³³⁷ The reason why we may think that 'Nature' and 'God' in POPE are two different entities is that they are correlated, respectively, with 'body' and 'soul', which in a traditional philosophical terminology, refer to two distinct substances, suggests MENDELSSOHN. But the position of more than one substance is illegitimate in Spinozan metaphysics, the chief principles of which are the unicity and indivisibility of substance.³³⁸ Hence, if a real ontological difference is made between body and soul, the world soul theory may not stand together with Spinozism.³³⁹

Consequently, it is possible to conceive of God as the soul of the world and not be a Spinozist. But the *Weltseele*-theory, declares MENDELSSOHN without any further explanation here, is, in any case, erroneous. As we have anticipated above, the explanation of this thesis lies with the systematic rational theology of the *Morgenstunden* (1785), an informal lecture course dealing, first and foremost, with the demonstration of the existence of God, a posteriori (two arguments) as well as a priori (one argument). That the 'strong' world soul theory (the identification of God with the world soul) is an unthinkable alternative in the conceptual frame of MENDELSSOHN'S metaphysics, emerges implicitly and accidentally from the first a posteriori demonstration, which is, at the same time, MENDELSSOHN'S most convincing proof of the existence of God.

In a methodological respect, MENDELSSOHN'S argumentation departs from the Cartesian problem of the existence of external reality: the ultimate guarantee of the real existence of the sensible world can only be a proof of the existence and wisdom of the

Spinosismo eben so weit abstehen, als von der Wahrheit. Sollte ihnen also Pope diese seltenen Redansarten abgeborgt haben, wie steht es um die Worte Extends thro' all extent; ... Wird diese Lehre einem andern als Spinosen zugehören? Wer hat sonst die Ausdehnung der Natur für eine Eigenschaft Gottes gehalten, als dieser berufene Irrgläubige? ... Und daher hat er (POPE) auch kein Bedenken getragen, die Allgegenwart Gottes, Theils in der Sprache der Spinosisten, theils in der Sprache derjenigen, die Gott für die Seele der Welt halten, auszudrücken ..." (Ibid., pp. 71–72. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

³³⁷ Cf. *Ethica*, Foreword to part four: "Ostendimus enim in Primae Partis Appendice Naturam propter finem non agere; aeternum namque illud, & infinitum Ens, quod Deum, seu Naturam appellamus, eadem, qua existit, necessitate agit. Ex qua enim naturae necessitate existit, ex eadem ipsum agere ostendimus. Ratio igitur, seu causa, cur Deus, seu Natura agit, & cur existit, una, eademque est." (ÁJELLES and RIEUWERTSZ, eds.), p. 162.)

³³⁸ Cf. *Ethica*, part one, theses V, VI, XIII, XIV, XV.

³³⁹ On the systematic philosophical incompatibility of the *anima mundi* theory with Spinozism, see our Section 3.

highest understanding.³⁴⁰ The first a posteriori demonstration of the existence of the Highest Being, then, starts out from the immediate and, therefore, absolutely certain internal experience that the empirical I constantly changes; and the argument eventually reaches the conclusion that an unchanging, necessary, extramundane being is the determining ground, *zureichender Grund*, of those changes. It is at once apparent that this is a particular version of the Leibnizian cosmological argument *a contingentia mundi*. MENDELSSOHN explicitly relies on LEIBNIZ'S proof as an argumentative basis,³⁴¹ but combines it with the (also Leibnizian) theory of God's choice of the best, *die Wahl des Besten*. An accidentally existing thing may come to be, and be specifically determined in respect of its attributes, only when the necessary being, by a considered choice, has found that it embodies the best possible case, among all other practicable cases in the actual condition of the universe.³⁴² The relative perfection (*Güte*) of an accidental substance will be the determining ground of the decision of the divine will, by the creative power of which the thing in question (or a specific condition of it) crosses over from non-existence to being, from potentiality to actuality. In point of essence, further, the world is a mirror of God: every finite thing is an *external* realization of a specifically limited degree of one of the internal perfections of the divine nature.³⁴³ If the world is truly a *mirror* of God, then it must have a dependent, but substantially separate existence; it must have its own principle of identity. The logic of the Leibnizian cosmological argument, which sees God as the *condition* of existence, thus brings us to the conclusion that God must be outside the concatenation of accidentally existing substances, so He may not be conceived as the soul of the world either:

God thinks his own properties together with the infinitely manifold limitations which they can be represented with in thought. In other words, He thinks all possible gradations of His perfections and joins to each of them a degree of assent and approval proportional to its particular

³⁴⁰Cf. *Morgenstunden: Vorerkenntniß von Wahrheit, Schein und Irrthum*, VI: "Wenn wir uns vom Daseyn eines höchsten Wesens und von seinen Eigenschaften überzeugt haben werden; so wird sich ein Weg zeigen, uns auch einigen Begriff von der Unendlichkeit seiner Erkenntniß zu machen; und von dieser mit mehrerer Wahrheit, vielleicht auf eine wissenschaftliche demonstrative Art, das Vorgeben der Idealisten zu widerlegen, und das wirkliche Daseyn einer sinnlichen Welt außer uns unumstößlich zu beweisen." (JA vol. III/2, p. 55.)

³⁴¹Cf. *Morgenstunden: Wissenschaftliche Lehrbegriffe vom Daseyn Gottes*, XII (the metaphysically weightiest part of the whole book): "Eine ins {U}nendliche zurückgehende Reihe zufälliger Ursachen kann den völlig zureichenden Grund nicht enthalten, warum ein zufälliges Ding vielmehr ist, als nicht ist; vielmehr so, als anders vorhanden ist. Da also zufällige Wesen wirklich vorhanden sind; so muß es auch ein nothwendiges Wesen geben, das den Grund aller zufälligen Dinge in sich enthält, das aber selbst den Grund seines Daseyns nicht wieder außer sich, sondern in sich selbst, in seinem eigenen Wesen, in seiner innern Möglichkeit hat." (*Ibid.*, p. 96.)

³⁴²Cf. in the same chapter: "Unter jeder Bedingung der Zeit und des Raums erlanget irgendwo und irgendwann etwas anders die Qualität des Besten, und eben dadurch den Wahrheitsgrund seines Daseyns. Nun kann diese relative Güte eines zufälligen Wesens auf keine andere Weise seinen Wirklichkeitsgrund enthalten, als in so weit es dadurch einer freyen Ursache zur Absicht dienen, und sonach von derselben gebilliget werden kann. Der Grund meines Daseyns muß also in einer freyen Ursache zu suchen seyn, die mich jetzt und hier, als zu der Reihe des Besten gehörig, erkannt und gebilliget hat, und dadurch bewogen worden ist, mich zur Wirklichkeit zu bringen. Diese freye Ursache kann selbst nicht zufällig seyn ..." (*Ibid.*, p. 100; roman characters by MENDELSSOHN.)

³⁴³Cf. LESSING, *Das Christenthum der Vernunft* (1753, partially cited by MENDELSSOHN in chapter XV of the *Morgenstunden*), § 13; see our [Section 9](#).

value. He thinks all possible relations among these grades of limited perfection, without, however, merging them into one single subject because in that manner, they are not unifiable. Hence, He thinks them as a system of connections between different things. Of such possible systems of connections between limited things, one will be the best, as compared to the rest, in so far as each particular thing in it will be the best in its own place and time. God thinks this most perfect system of connections and everything that occurs in it, limited as they are according to time and order, in Himself, with the highest grade of approval because they are the best. Now the objective which the power of approval strives to reach is the production of the approved thing; the power of approval involves an endeavour to bring into being the represented object according to the ideal pattern. Therefore, the power of the Independent Being will produce these limited grades of His own perfections and their best possible system of connections. Not inside Himself, though, because they are not unifiable with His properties but outside Himself, as limited substances existing by themselves, each in the time and place in which it has been conceived to serve best, with respect to the entire system.³⁴⁴

The doctrine of extradivine substantiality ('*außergöttliche Substantialität*')³⁴⁵ is, perhaps, the most important metaphysical conclusion of MENDELSSOHN'S *Morgenstunden*. It embodies the essence of his criticism of Spinozism, and that criticism may legitimately be seen as the core issue of the book. The *nervus probandi* of his argumentation (the critical point that decides whether extradivine existence may be attributed to the finite things) is the proposition that the best possible world – in principle, a mirror image of the divine perfections – is 'not unifiable' ("*nicht vereinbar*") with those perfections themselves. This thesis seems to beg the question because on MENDELSSOHN'S own hypothesis, each finite thing comes to be precisely as an image of a particular aspect of the divine essence. There is, thus, at least an affinity of essence between the divine archetype and the individual thing (*ectypon*). This would advocate unificability, rather than separation, of the two (infinite and finite) natures, while the principle of the real difference between them still needs elucidation.³⁴⁶

³⁴⁴"Gott denkt seine Eigenschaften mit den unendlich mannigfaltigen Einschränkungen, mit welchen sie denkbar sind. D. h. er denkt alle mögliche Abstufungen seiner Vollkommenheiten mit dem einer jeden angemessenen Grade von Billigung und Wohlgefallen. Er denkt sich alle mögliche Verbindungen dieser eingeschränkten Vollkommenheiten; nicht in einem Wesen; denn sie sind unvereinbar; aber er denkt sie sich in Verbindung vieler. Unter diesen möglichen Verbindungen vieler eingeschränkten Wesen, wird Eine im Ganzen, Vergleichungsweise, die beste seyn; so wie jedes einzelne in derselben an seinem Orte und zu seiner Zeit das Beste seyn muß. Gott denkt sich diese vollkommenste Verbindung, und alle in derselben vorkommenden nach Zeit und Ordnung eingeschränkten Dinge, in so weit sie das Beste sind, mit dem höchsten Grade der Billigung. Billigungskraft hat zum Ziele die Hervorbringung des Gegenstandes, das Bestreben den Gegenstand der Vorstellung nach Maaßgebung des Ideals zur Wirklichkeit zu bringen. Die Kraft des selbstständigen Wesens (Gott) wird also diese eingeschränkte Grade seiner Vollkommenheit und ihre bestmögliche Verbindung hervorbringen; nicht in sich, denn sie sind mit seinen Eigenschaften nicht vereinbar; sondern außer sich, als für sich bestehende eingeschränkte Substanzen, jede mit der Veränderung in Ort und Raume, mit welcher sie in Beziehung auf das Ganze das Beste sind." (*Morgenstunden: Wissenschaftliche Lehrbegriffe vom Daseyn Gottes*, XII; JA vol. III/2, pp. 101–102. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting by MENDELSSOHN.)

³⁴⁵Cf. "Das Bewußtseyn meiner selbst verbunden mit völliger Unkunde alles dessen, so (=was) nicht in meinem Denkkreis fällt, ist der sprechendste Beweis von meiner außergöttlichen Substantialität, von meinem urbildlichen Daseyn." (*Morgenstunden*, chapter XIV; *ibid.*, p. 118.)

³⁴⁶The thesis of 'non-unification' is one on which LESSING explicitly differs from his friend MENDELSSOHN; cf. *Ueber die Wirklichkeit der Dinge außer Gott* (1763). See our [Section 9](#).

It is the Leibnizian cosmological argument, equally present in the text, that helps MENDELSSOHN out at this point. Thus, his train of thought seems a combination of the cosmological argument with a theory of creation as representation of the divine nature. As this complex theory excludes the intramundaneity of the deity (and thereby the world soul theory), God and Nature will remain two substantially separate entities, though God, the necessary being, is regarded as the ground of existence of the world. MENDELSSOHN'S summarizing statement recalls the wording of *Pope ein Metaphysiker!* as he says that:

*Hence, we separate God from Nature, and attribute to God an extramundane existence and to Nature, an extradivine existence. The supporter of the above-mentioned pantheism, whom we are confronted with here, supposes, on the contrary, that there is absolutely no existence outside God but the mental representations of the Infinite One have acquired, by virtue of their necessity, a sort of existence within God Himself, an existence which is most intimately united with the essence of God.*³⁴⁷

MENDELSSOHN thus rigidly maintains the real difference between finite and infinite being, Nature and God, and consequently rejects the *Weltseele*-theory. The thinker whose position on the world soul we next consider, HERDER, does not accept the doctrine about the extramundaneity of God, but also refuses the *Weltseele*-theory, as we shall see in the following chapter.

14 HERDER'S REJECTION OF THE UNIVOCAL IDENTIFICATION OF GOD WITH THE WORLD SOUL IN *Gott. Einige Gespräche* (1787) IN THE CONTEXT OF HIS COSMIC THEOLOGY. THE QUASI-WORLD SOUL OF THE *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* V/2 (1784)

It appears from the foreword of the first edition (1787)³⁴⁸ of Johann Gottfried HERDER'S (1744–1803) *Gott. Einige Gespräche* that he started dealing systematically with SPINOZA'S philosophy at least as early as 1775–1777, when he was working away on 'a little writing', which should have carried the title, *Spinoza, Shaftesbury, Leibniz*. When, in 1787, *Gott. Einige Gespräche* came out, HERDER'S project had been substantially changed inasmuch as he took SPINOZA'S thought only as a starting-point now, from which to develop his own

³⁴⁷“Wir trennen also Gott von der Natur, schreiben jenem ein ausserweltliches, so wie der Welt ein aussergöttliches Wesen zu. Der Anhänger des vorhergedachten Pantheismus hingegen, mit dem wir es hier zu thun haben, nimmt an: Es gebe überall kein aussergöttliches Daseyn; sondern die Vorstellungen des Unendlichen erlangen durch ihre Nothwendigkeit eine Art von Daseyn in Gott selbst, das im Grunde mit seinem Wesen auf das innigste vereint sey.” (*Morgenstunden*, chapter XIV; *ibid.*, p. 121. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.)

³⁴⁸Gotha 1787. Second edition in 1800, under an altered title that emphasized the relation of the text to Spinozism: *Gott. Einige Gespräche über Spinoza's System; nebst Shaftesburi's Naturhymnus* (“*Shaftesburi's Naturhymnus*” is a paraphrase in verse, of part three, section one of SHAFTESBURY'S *The Moralists, a Philosophical Rhapsody*, which is itself the fifth piece of his *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*).

philosophy of God. By that time, however, the philosophical theology expounded in *Gott* inevitably made a very different impact from the one it could have made before on the German intellectual scene, as the *Pantheismusstreit*, chiefly between JACOBI and MENDELSSOHN, was at its height precisely in the years following 1785. HERDER, therefore, felt obliged to note, still in the foreword, that his book was not to be read as representative of a position taken up in the case (although the fourth conversation comments extensively on JACOBI'S *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza*, and, in particular, on LESSING'S statement about the world soul). *Gott* is thus no *reaction* on the external intellectual circumstances of its publication, but the result of HERDER'S own philosophical interests and intrinsic evolution of thought.³⁴⁹

The roots of that evolution reach back far in time to the earliest HERDER, known to us from manuscript fragments, which testify to the coherence of his theological thought from the very beginning. That coherence flows from HERDER'S systematically argued, anti-Leibnizian conviction that an *extramundane* deity is unconceivable, though God is, at the same time, not identical with the world in point of substance.³⁵⁰ The intradivinity of the world, the intimate, full and active presence of God in creation, God as the principle of life, as an active force, which is also the source of being – these are HERDER'S fundamental theological theses, whereby he, in some aspects, carries on the intellectual heritage of the mature LESSING, and heralds in essential Romantic ideas concerning the relationship between God and

³⁴⁹For a precise reconstruction of the *Entstehungsgeschichte*, see HAYM'S monography, vol. II, chapter *Das Spinozabüchlein*, pp. 284–285 (see also the extensive footnote on page 285).

³⁵⁰That the doctrine of the intramundaneity of God, and the *Weltseele*-problem, had been present in HERDER'S thought from the earliest times, is proved by, e.g., the *Grundsätze der Philosophie* (early, undated fragment from HERDER'S youth): “*Es ist also kein Gott ohne Welt möglich: so wie keine Welt ohne Gott. Es existirt also alles Mögliche wirklich, sonst wäre es nicht eine Welt Gottes. ... Gott erfüllt den Raum durch seine Kraft, er ist aber nicht &c. (scil. er ist aber nicht Raum) er erfüllt die Zeit durch seine Kraft, er ist aber &c. ... Gott gehört also zur Welt: wie die Welt zu Gott. Er ist das Princip: Alles also ist Contingens: so fern es Grund in Gott hat; aber auch nothwendig, so fern es nothwendig zum Gedanken Gottes gehört. ... Gott ist also wie die Sonne: der Mittelpunkt aller Sterne: überall Anziehung gegenwärtig. So wie sich ihr Körper, der Licht ist, zum Körper der Planetenmassen verhält: so gleichsam Gott zu den endlichern Dingen. ... So wie sich Planetenkörper im Universum durch die Anziehungs- und Zurückstoßungskraft gebildet: so auch unsre Seele den Körper: und so Gott die Welt.*” (SUPHAN ed., vol. XXXII, pp. 228–229.) This note already proffers the theses that God ‘fills out’ space and time, though He *is* not space and time; and that the concept of God is necessarily connected with that of nature, though this does not mean that God depends on nature. The analogy here that God has so built the world as the soul builds the body may be the earliest anticipation of the *Weltseele*-problem in HERDER'S life work. Another early, though not undated, exposition of the same problem is found in the *Journal meiner Reise im Jahr 1769* (often cited as ‘*Reise-Journal*’), in the significant second part of the appendix *Einzelne Blätter zum “Journal der Reise”*. This part, important in a political philosophical respect (HERDER, a republican in the *Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität*, here still appears as a monarchist), the author sets up an analogy between soul and body on the one hand, and God and the world on the other: “*So wie unsre Seele den Körper erfüllet: so Gott die Welt: so ein Monarch sein Reich: so ein Lykurg sein Sparta: daher haben kleine Republiken in ihrer Eingeschränktheit sich so vorzüglich gouvernirt.*” (SUPHAN ed., vol. IV, p. 467.)

Nature. The discussion of HERDER'S philosophical position on the *anima mundi*-theory, then, must take place in the context of these principles insofar as his rejection of a univocal, but admittance of a metaphorical or analogical, identification of God with the *Weltseele* depends on precisely how he determines the way in which God acts in, and sustains, nature.

The conceptual delimitation of God from the world soul will have to be nuanced clearly because the doctrine of the intramundaneity of God (or, conversely, of the intradivinity of the world) breaks down into the theses that God (a) is immediately present in the physical world in His fullness in every creature; (b) is immediately felt (experienced) by man; (c) is an active power operating internally in the creatures; (d) is the immanent principle of the life of the world; and that He (e) is expressed (*Ausdruck*) by the world. These divine attributes all together seem to evoke, *prima facie*, the concept of the *Weltseele*. Letter 30 (1781) of the *Epistles Concerning the Study of Theology* (*Briefe, das Studium der Theologie betreffend*) had already specified the essential attributes of HERDER'S concept of God in terms that apparently indicate a philosophical affinity with the notion of the world soul:

The Bible always speaks of God as a present, living, and active being, who lives in all His works, operates in each single being, is active in every single work, even the smallest affair of our lives. This is why His concept is so indispensable and the doctrine about Him so fascinating and serene. At the same time, this conception of God leads us on to the only way in which we can, as it were, ascertain the truth about Him, perceive Him and let others perceive Him. In short, this is the fundament of all religion on earth. I cannot conceive of the Infinite One beyond the bounds of the world, this God does not awaken my interest because thus, He is far away from me. But the God who surrounds me, who penetrates my being, who created me, who created the entire world, He is my God and Father! Wherever there is force in nature, there He is; if there is spirit in Nature, it is the breath and force of His spirit. He is in all and all are in Him.³⁵¹

In this prefiguration of the more systematic doctrine of *Gott*, HERDER, a Lutheran pastor, warns that the dogmatic grounds of religious feeling (devotion) are the theological theses concerning the actual intramundane presence, life and activity of God. If God does not have these attributes, then the world is not *God's* world, contends HERDER.

³⁵¹ "Immer spricht die Bibel von Gott als einem gegenwärtigen, lebendigen, thätigen Wesen, lebendig in allen seinen Werken, thätig in jedem einzelnen Wesen, thätig in jedem einzelnen Werk, ja im kleinsten Geschäft unsres Lebens; dadurch wird sein Begriff andringend; dadurch wird die Lehre von ihm reizend und liebevoll. Allerdings ist dies auch der einzige Weg, uns Gottes gleichsam zu vergewissern, ihn selbst wahrnehmen und ihn ändern bemerkbar zu machen; kurz, es ist der Grund aller Religion auf Erden. Den Unendlichen ausser der Welt begreife ich nicht, er reget mich auch nicht; denn er ist ferne von mir. Aber der Gott, der mich umgiebt, der mich durchschaut, der mich schuf, der alles schuf, der mich erhält und führet, der ist mein Gott und Vater! Wo Kraft in der Natur ist, ist Er; wo Geist in der Natur ist, ists Hauch und Kraft seines Geistes: Er in Allen und es bestehet alles in ihm." (SUPHAN ed., vol. X, p. 327. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI.) A later theological interpretation of the breath of God (*Hauch Gottes*) as an *image* denoting the effective presence of God in the world, is found in the fourth collection (entitled *Vom Geist des Christenthums*, 1789) of the *Christliche Schriften* (cf. SUPHAN ed., vol. XX, pp. 23–24; see further below, in our main text).

While God in the Leibnizian conception, as the immaterial extramundane being, does obtain a logical necessity of existence by virtue of the cosmological argument, still He appears, as it were, 'spaced-out' in relation to the world. The extramundane God is thus the perfect infinite being existing in an essentially different order of reality, which is inaccessible to religious experience, and remote, or even isolated, from the life of the finite beings (*"er ist ferne von mir"*). He is represented as standing outside the network (*series, concatenatio*) that constitutes the world of possible experience. In such an ontological scheme, no communication (let alone communion) seems possible between the finite pole and the infinite pole. Although there does exist a necessary causal connection between them, this is of a purely logical and, hence, mental nature (*relatio rationis*); there is no question, in this scheme, of a natural, dynamic interaction of live forces, divine and human, in a world of life (*relatio realis*). God, as a *living* being, who is also God the Father, and a god of the world, suggests HERDER, is hereby almost reduced to the logical status of an *ens rationis ratiocinantis*. This is also the position of the later *Gott*, where the basis of every further philosophical argumentation is, as we have anticipated, the thesis concerning the intramundaneity of God:³⁵²

*... by virtue of the last trait, you have also referred to the Infinite, which is there in every natural force ... Consider the internal plenitude of the force which reveals itself in every living being according as they could come to be, continue to be and reproduce themselves only by virtue of a prodigious energy implanted in them. ... In generation itself, discover the miracle of the implanted, immanent power of the godhead, which, if I may say so, has reduced itself into the essence of every organic being and operates continuously and unchangeably, according to eternal laws in that essence, in a manner which becomes the godhead only. Although we call matter inanimate, there are, in every single part of it, no less important and no smaller divine forces: we are encompassed by omnipotence, we are afloat in the ocean of omnipotence.*³⁵³

³⁵²Cf. how C. SIEGEL, author of a monograph on *Herder als Philosoph*, philosophically accounts for HERDER'S theology of the intramundane God: *"Und zwar kann es schon deshalb keinen Gott außerhalb oder jenseits der Welt geben, weil dies räumliche Bestimmungen sind, und Raum nur für die Welt und in der Welt existiert. Und da etwas Ähnliches wie für den Raum, auch für die Zeit gilt, so kann es ebensowenig einen vorweltlichen Gott geben, einen Gott, der etwa im Leibnizschen Sinne zunächst müßig gewesen wäre und dann plötzlich den Einfall bekommen hätte, eine Welt zu erschaffen. Hier folgt Herder nicht wie sonst so vielfach dem großen deutschen Philosophen, sondern vielmehr dem portugiesisch-jüdischen Denker, welcher mit Gott auch stets die Welt gegeben sein läßt."* (SIEGEL, chapter XIV: *"Gott und Welt"*, p. 147; underlining added.)

³⁵³⁴⁴... *mit dem letztem Zuge haben Sie zugleich das Unendliche angedeutet, das in jeder Naturkraft selbst ... lieget. Erwägen Sie die innere Fülle der Kraft, die sich in jedem lebendigen Wesen zeigt, wie es durch eine ihm eingepflanzte ungeheure Wirksamkeit entstehen und sich nicht anders als durch solche erhalten und fortpflanzen konnte. ... In der Generation allein liegt das Wunder einer eingepflanzten, einwohnenden Macht der Gottheit, die sich, wenn ich so kühn reden darf, in das Wesen jeder Organisation gleichsam selbst beschränkt hat und in diesem Wesen nach ewigen Gesetzen unverrückt und unwandelbar, wie die Gottheit allein wirken kann, wirkt. In der Materie, die wir todt nennen, streben auf jedem Punkt nicht minder und nicht kleinere göttliche Kräfte: wir sind mit Allmacht umgeben, wir schwimmen in einem Ocean der Allmacht."* (*Gott. Zweites Gespräch*, Theophron to Philolaus; SUPHAN ed., vol. XVI, pp. 455–456. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, set-out characters by HERDER.)

HERDER's combined natural philosophical and theological conception of the inherent powers of finite substances, and of the internal operation of God within those substances, recalls both Spinozistic and Leibnizian doctrines, but remains within the bounds of a broadly conceived Christian onto-theology. From SPINOZA, he borrows (a version of) the theory of representation that the finite *modi* are *expressions* of the divine power,³⁵⁴ while the proposition that finite things are vested with inherent powers ('*eingepflanzte Wirksamkeit*') by God apparently comes from the Leibnizian philosophy of the active forces, *vires activae*, of composite substances (cf., e.g., *De ipsa natura*, Section 1 of Chapter 3). But the originality of HERDER's conception lies with the attempt to reconcile the theory of the intramundaneity and omnipresence of God, with that of the real difference between the finite substances and the infinite one. In other words, HERDER strives to keep as much of Spinozism as is compatible with Christian orthodox theology: drawing on the Spinozistic doctrine of the indivisibility of the divine substance, he fundamentally reinterprets the '*Deus seu Natura*'-thesis.³⁵⁵ God is thus strictly *in* the world, but He *is* not the world; every physical point of the world is a *representation* and *visualisation* of God, but *is* not God; every limited form of being is an *activation* of divine power, but *is* not that power; every finite substance *experiences* within itself the operation of the Infinite One, but *is* not the Infinite One. It may be countered that there is, in this metaphysical conception, a degree of dialectical or conceptual obscurity, or perhaps even self-contradiction, but this may in turn flow from the nature of the divine essence, ineffable or unconceivable for us, as HERDER does not fail to point out.³⁵⁶

Though the dialectical formulation of the grounding principle of HERDER's theology may be problematic to a degree, it is still clear that what he tries to articulate in it is actual religious experience – more precisely, experience of God, through the medium of Nature as well as at the deepest of one's self. As we have seen above, an

³⁵⁴Cf. "Alle Dinge, sagt er (scil. SPINOZA), sind Modificationen oder wie wirs unansthöiger sagen wollen, Ausdrücke der göttlichen Kraft, Hervorbringungen einer der Welt einwohnenden ewigen Wirkung Gottes: sie sind aber nicht zertrennliche Theile eines völlig untheilbaren Einzigen Daseyns." (*Ibid.*, p. 457; set-out characters by HERDER.)

³⁵⁵Cf. HERDER's interpretation of SPINOZA's concept of substance: "Sein unendliches höchst-wirkliches Wesen ist so wenig die Welt selbst, als das Unendliche der Vernunft und das Endlose der Einbildungskraft Eins ist: kein Theil der Welt kann also auch ein Theil Gottes seyn, weil das einfache höchste Wesen durchaus keine Theile hat." (*Ibid.*) Note that HERDER's interpretation of Spinozism apparently changed in the course of time, as he in an earlier letter to JACOBI (20 December 1784, cited below, in our main text) had adumbrated the same Spinozan concept in historically truer terms: "Seine (SPINOZA's) einzige Substanz ist das ens realissimum, in dem sich alles, was Wahrheit, inniges Leben und Dasein ist, intus und radicaliter vereinigt, ja durch welches es nur gedacht werden kann, und es werden in allen Erscheinungen einzelner Dinge, als Modificationen des höchsten unendlichen innigen Daseins, diese Attribute nur denkbar, sofern jene seiner Natur sind und der einzig Daseiende bleibend in ihnen wohnt." (DÜNTZER and HERDER *filii* eds., vol. II, p. 263; roman, and set-out characters by HERDER.) In HERDER's letter, this agreeing presentation is an introduction to the delineation of his own theological position.

³⁵⁶Cf. *Gott, Zweites Gespräch*: "Wir wissen nicht, was Kraft sei oder wie Kraft wirke; viel weniger wissen wir, wie die göttliche Kraft etwas hervorgebracht habe und sich jedem Dinge nach seiner Weise mittheile. Daß indessen alles von Einem selbstständigen Wesen sowohl in seinem Daseyn als in seiner Verbindung, mithin auch in jeder Aeußerung seiner Kräfte abhängen müsse; daran kann kein consequenter Geist zweifeln." (SUPHAN ed., vol. XVI, pp. 441–442.)

important concomitant of the intramundaneity of God is that He is immediately experienced by man through the external natural, and the internal spiritual phenomena:

*We are human beings, and – so it seems to me – we must come to know God as human beings, i.e., in the manner in which He has really given and revealed Himself to us. Through concepts, we perceive Him as a concept, through words, as a word; but by natural contemplations, by the use of our own capacities, by the enjoyment of our lives, we enjoy Him as a really existing being which is full of power and life.*³⁵⁷

The point that God, in contradiction to what the presuppositions of Kantian transcendental philosophy suggest, may be an object of immediate personal experience is certainly a reaction to the theology of extramundaneity, which, in HERDER'S view, relies on an empty conceptuality and does not grasp the reality of God. The doctrine that an experiential knowledge of God is possible, then, will be of capital importance for the Romantic generation. 'Anschauung der Natur' is, as is known, the key term of the early SCHLEIERMACHER'S theology in *Über die Religion*; but HERDER'S theory of the experience of God attributes a normative role also to a cognate (*fühlen*) of SCHLEIERMACHER'S other key term, *Gefühl*. Thus, in one of HERDER'S letters to JACOBI, the author expounds his conception of the divine nature on account of the interpretation and evaluation of Spinozism (on which he substantially differed from JACOBI) much in the religious terminology of the early German Romantics:

*God is, needless to say, outside you and operates into, in and through all His creatures (I do not know any extramundane God). But God is not of much use to you unless He is (also) inside you so you can feel and enjoy His being in an infinitely intimate way and unless He can enjoy Himself in you as in one of his one thousand million organs. ... certainly, there is something in you which partakes in His nature. Hence, you always enjoy God in your innermost being only, and in this way, He is unchangeably and indelibly in you as the source and origin of the most spiritual and eternal existence.*³⁵⁸

Hence, God is contemplated in nature, as well as felt (and enjoyed) 'in an infinitely intimate way' at the bottom of the soul. But if God is so, if He is an active power, omnipresent and all-pervasive, intimately present in each creature of the phenomenal world, the world of experience, then He may easily be perceived as the soul of the world, which, in the classical philosophical tradition, has some very similar

³⁵⁷ "Wir sind Menschen und als solche, dünkt mich, müssen wir Gott kennen lernen, wie er sich uns wirklich gegeben und geoffenbaret hat. Durch Begriffe empfangen wir ihn nur als einen Begriff, durch Worte nur als ein Wort; durch Anschauungen der Natur aber, durch den Gebrauch unsrer Kräfte, durch den Genuß unsres Lebens genießen wir ihn als wirkliches Daseyn voll Kraft und Leben." (Gott, Fünftes Gespräch; SUPHAN ed., vol. XVI, p. 533. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, set-out characters by HERDER; underlining added.)

³⁵⁸ "Gott ist freilich außer Dir und wirkt zu, in und durch alle Geschöpfe (den extramundanen Gott kenne ich nicht), aber was soll Dir der Gott, wenn er nicht in Dir ist und Du sein Dasein auf unendlich innige Art fühlst und schmeckst und er sich selbst auch in Dir als in einem Organ seiner tausend Millionen Organe genießet. ... es muß etwas in Dir sein, das seiner Natur theilhaftig werde. Du genießest also Gott nur immer nach Deinem innersten Selbst, und so ist er als Quelle und Wurzel des geistigsten, ewigen Daseins unveränderlich und unaustilgbar in Dir." (HERDER'S letter to JACOBI, of 20 December 1784; DÜNTZER and HERDER *filius* eds., vol. II, pp. 263–265. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, underlining added.)

attributes. Let us see, then, on what argumentative ground HERDER rejects a univocal identification of God with the world soul, while he does *not* refuse the *analogy* that as the soul is to the body, so God is to the world. This position is, needless to say, a second point of outstanding interest for an investigation concerning the early German Romantic theories on the world soul.

HERDER's original argument in this respect is that God, as a substance, is not a (simple) soul (he usually categorizes God as 'Geist'), but, as it were, the quintessence of soul, "*die Seele aller Seelen*",³⁵⁹ whereby He actually relates to soul as soul to body. From God's perspective, the world is simply not perceived as a body that is impenetrable for the senses. God's perception penetrates the world, which to Him appears as pure spiritual substance. Hence, a most fundamental *differentia* between God and the human soul lies in the distinctness of perception:

*The image of the soul of the world is, like all other images, defective because for God, the world is not body but entirely soul. If our soul had such a clear concept of itself and its body as the one God has of these things, then the body would not be coarse body for it anymore but it would recognize itself in the body as such and such a force, operating in this and no other manner. In this case, however, it would also be God, i.e., ἔν καὶ πᾶν, which it can never be, however high it should rise.*³⁶⁰

If human soul had intellectual vision, like God does have, it would not see a different substance in corporeal reality but would recognize *itself* in matter, as an active force that produces several different effects. This would be the discovery of the true intelligible nature of substance, and the (impossible) deification of soul, insofar as God sees the phenomenal universe precisely in this manner.

Another line of argument against the univocal identification of God with the world soul departs from the concept of God as the most perfect existence (*das vollkommenste Daseyn*). The abstract character of this notion, argues HERDER, does not make it possible that we apply on God sensual-visualizing images ('Bild') like that of the world soul, although what this image philosophically suggests is, in a certain sense, true:

Theophron. ... their (scil. of the Jewish Cabbalists) God was called Jehovah, i.e., »I am who I am and I will be who I will be.« This concept refers to the highest, totally incomparable existence in itself and excludes all emanations. Spinoza remained true to this high, unique concept; and on this account, he is dear to me. There is no other, more absolute, pure or fruitful concept in the human reason; because you can not rise beyond the eternal, independent, most perfect existence, which establishes all other things, and in which all other things are given.

Philolaus. So you will not have an explicit liking for the image of the soul of the world either?

³⁵⁹ *Gott, Zweites Gespräch*; SUPHAN ed., vol. XVI, p. 453.

³⁶⁰ "*Das Bild: 'Seele der Welt' ist wie alle Gleichnisse mangelhaft, denn für Gott ist die Welt nicht Körper, sondern ganz Seele. Hätte unsre Seele die Klarheit des Begriffs von sich u. von ihrem Leibe, die Gott hat: so wäre sie so weit, daß der Körper nicht mehr für sie, grober Körper, sondern sie selbst sei, wirkend in solchen u. solchen Kräften, nach solchen u. keinen anderen Arten. Denn wäre sie aber auch Gott d.i. εν κ. παν, was sie nie werden kann, so weit sie steige.*" (HERDER's letter to JACOBI, of 6 February 1784; GA, *Briefwechsel*, vol. 3, p. 281. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI; see also [Section 12](#), footnote *ad in.*)

Theophron. It is a humanly conceived image and if it is used cautiously, it may help to visualize several aspects of the intimately immanent power of God. Nevertheless, it is an image which, unless used with the greatest precaution, will mislead us. ³⁶¹

This is, then, HERDER'S ultimate philosophical verdict on the *Weltseele*-problem: the world soul is an *image* only, which can serve (when applied to God with the necessary theological precaution) to visualize, with the power of the imagination and not of the intellect, the divine attributes of intramundaneity, omnipresence, and internal operation within the finite substances. Although God is, according to *Gott*, essentially a force (*Kraft*)³⁶² and the immanent cause of all existence, the source of all life and movement, He is *not* the first perfection, substantial form, or soul, of the material cosmos as a whole.³⁶³ HERDER would hold this view till the end of his career as a theologian. In a late text entitled, *Vom Geist des Christenthums* (1798), he determines how the breath of God (*Hauch Gottes*) animates the natural world as well as the human individual and society. But the 'breath of God' is, here, in turn, conceived as the word or command of God, manifested in the active powers of nature and in the ethical and intellectual virtues of the individual and of the society. That God moves and influences the world thus does not mean that He is the *soul* of the world in the strict sense of the

³⁶¹"*Theophron. ... ihr Gott hieß Jehovah: d.i. 'ich bin der ich bin und werde seyn, der ich seyn werde.'* Dieser Begriff schließt die höchste, völlig unvergleichbare Existenz in sich, so wie er alle Emanationen ausschließt. Spinoza blieb diesem hohen, einzigen Begriff treu; deßhalb er mir auch werth ist. Es giebt keinen absolutern, reinern, fruchtbareren Begriff in der menschlichen Vernunft: denn über das ewige, durch sich bestehende, vollkommenste Daseyn, durch welches Alles gesetzt, in welchem Alles gegeben ist, läßt sich nicht steigen. Philolaus. Also wird Ihnen auch das Bild der Weltseele nicht sonderlich lieb seyn? *Theophron. Es ist ein menschliches Bild und wenn es vorsichtig gebraucht wird, kann von der innig-einwohnenden Kraft Gottes manches dadurch anschaulich gesagt werden; indessen bleibt es ein Bild, das ohne die größte Vorsichtigkeit sogleich mißbräth.*" (*Gott, Viertes Gespräch*; SUPHAN ed., vol. XVI, pp. 525–526. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, set-out characters by HERDER.)

³⁶²Cf. HAYM'S account of the essence of HERDER'S concept of God: "*Das Wesen Gottes ist Dasein im höchsten Sinne des Wortes, und Dasein fällt für Herder zusammen mit Kraft, die höchste Kraft wiederum ist ihm in Eins zugleich Macht, Weisheit und Güte. Die ganze Welt ist ein Ausdruck dieser drei, die mithin ebenso untrennbar das Wesen jedes in der Welt erscheinenden Daseins bilden. ... Die unendliche Kraft aber muß sich, da im All alles mögliche dasein muß, in einer unendlichen Abstufung von Kräften offenbaren.*" (HAYM, vol. II, p. 293.)

³⁶³Cf. SIEGEL'S description of HERDER'S nuanced position concerning the immanence of God in the world, and His concomitant differentia from the world: "*So wie Herder Leib und Seele im Grunde auf eine Substanz zurückgeführt hat, so setzt er auch Gott und Welt in das engste Verhältnis zueinander. Keine Welt ohne Gott, aber auch umgekehrt kein Gott ohne Welt. Das heißt: für Herder ist die Gottheit immanent, nicht transzendent. ... Trotzdem ist er weit entfernt, seinen Gott etwa in die Welt aufzulösen, Gott und Welt miteinander zu identifizieren. ... Und dem entspricht es, daß sich an noch viel mehr Stellen Umschreibungen der Art finden, wie «Vater der Welt», «Haushälterin in der Natur» u. s. w., welche deutlich Gott und Welt auseinanderhalten. Und diese Trennung erscheint Herdern unbedingt notwendig; ist doch Gott ewig und unendlich, die Welt höchstens endlos in Zeit und Raum.*" (SIEGEL, chapter XIV: "Gott und Welt", pp. 147–148.)

word, but that He is the supreme and absolute ruler of the world, *κοσμοκράτωρ*.³⁶⁴

Though this is HERDER'S last word on the subject, it is still striking to see how often he uses metaphors or analogies that describe God's rule of the world as the animation effectuated by the soul in the body. It is, therefore, less surprising to find that JACOBI, in the second edition of *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza*, complained that HERDER, when well-disposedly interpreting Spinozism in *Gott*, actually transformed it to a theory of the *Weltseele*.³⁶⁵ Yet HERDER'S own speculative philosophical intentions are clearly of a different kind. He certainly wanted to make a Scripture-inspired theological position on the borderline, if we may say so, between Spinozism and Leibnizianism, i.e., between a concept of God as an immanent cause, an *ens intramundanum*, and one as a vectorial power non-identical with the substance of the world.³⁶⁶ This difficult position, in any case, proved really seminal for the early German Romantic theories of God and the world soul, as well as on Romantic natural philosophical theories,³⁶⁷ while HERDER'S outspoken philosophical defence of Spinozism corroborated the new generation'S interest in SPINOZA.³⁶⁸

³⁶⁴Cf. Dritter Abschnitt, I/1–2: “1. ... *Wo sich inwohnende Kraft in den Geschöpfen regt und sie treibt, da wehete göttlicher Hauch; da war der Athem des Allmächtigen mächtig. (...) 2. Und zwar ward hiemit Gott nicht die Seele der Welt, als ob er sich allen Geschöpfen eingösse und eingegossen habe; der belebende Athem war Hauch seines Mundes, sein Machtwort; der Wind sein Diener, die Feuerflamme sein Bote. (...)*” (SUPHAN ed., vol. XX, p. 2; set-out characters by HERDER.)

³⁶⁵Cf. “*Herder findet überhaupt das Bild einer Weltseele bedenklich welches einigermmaßen befremden könnte, da seine Verbesserung des Spinozismus darauf allein herausläuft, den Gott dieses Systems in eine Weltseele zu verwandeln. Er scheint aber nur zu fürchten, daß man durch dieses Bild oder Wort sich verführen lasse, eine persönliche Gottheit zu träumen.*” (GA, Werke, vol. I/1, p. 33; set-out characters by JACOBI.)

³⁶⁶Cf. HAYM'S evaluation of the philosophical position HERDER occupies, in *Gott*, between Spinozism and Leibnizianism: “*Dem Spinoza fehlte noch ein Mittelbegriff zwischen Geist und Materie; ein solcher Mittelbegriff ist der Leibnitzische der substantiellen Kräfte, – und so verwandelt sich die Lehre jenes, daß die Gottheit unendliche Attribute in sich fasse, von denen wir zwei, Denken und Ausdehnung, erkennen, in die andre, daß Gott, die Urkraft, sich in unendlichen Kräften auf unendliche Weise offenbare. ... Er (HERDER) hat damit den Spinoza, wo er ihn haben wollte: «einen Schritt vor Leibniz voraus», auf einem Punkte, der zwischen Spinoza und Leibniz, zwischen Pantheismus und Theismus in jener schwankenden Mitte liegt, wo er sich am meisten mit Shaftesbury begegnet.*” (Cf. SHAFTESBURY'S *The Moralists. A Philosophical Rhapsody*, part three; HAYM, vol. II, pp. 290–291, set-out characters by HAYM.)

³⁶⁷Cf. HAYM'S reference to Schellingian natural philosophy on account of HERDER'S *Gott*: “*Hier (in the SPINOZA-interpretation of HERDER'S Gott) liegt der Keim zu der nachmaligen Combination des über aller Wirklichkeit thronenden Idealismus mit der empirischen Naturforschung. Durch Herders «Gott» wurde die Brücke zu jenem «Spinozismus der Physik» geschlagen, den der jugendliche Schelling der unfruchtbaren Einseitigkeit der Fichteschen Ichlehre entgegenstellte.*” (*Ibid.*, p. 296.)

³⁶⁸Cf. HAYM'S remark about the intellectual relationship between HERDER and SCHLEIERMACHER: “*Wenn Schleiermacher später eine Locke für die Manen des heiligen verstoßenen Spinoza forderte und im Anschauen des Universums die allgemeinste und höchste Formel der Religion finden wollte, so geschah es in Folge einer ähnlichen, wenn auch bedächtigeren und stillvolleren Umbildung der Spinozistischen Begriffe als sie sich Herder erlaubt hatte.*” (*Ibid.*)

Further, HERDER also instigated early German Romantic natural science and, in particular, BAADER, by setting up a theory of *aether*, an all-pervasive material substance, in *Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind* (*Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, 1784), Book V, Chapter 2.³⁶⁹ A 'corporification' of divine power, *aether*, on HERDER'S thesis, distributes warmth and life in the entire universe. An essential characteristic of this omnipresent agent is its power biologically-internally to organize matter; it is the material substrate of the organic powers, *organische Kräfte*, of God. Celestial and supra-sensible, it unifies in itself all the natural powers, and it might even be the sense organ, *sensorium*, of God:

*In the deepest chasms of coming-to-be, where we find sprouting life, we notice the unexplored and highly effective element which we denote with the imperfect name of light, aether, the warmth of life, and which is perhaps the sensory of the Maker of All. It is by virtue of this that He animates all and warms all up. Pouring out in a thousand and million organs, this celestial flow of fire keeps purifying itself constantly. Every force of nature operates, perhaps, by dint of this material, and the miracle of earthly creation, i.e., the generation of beings, depends entirely on it. ... It is either the case that the operation of my soul is not paralleled by anything in this natural world, and then it is not understandable how my soul can influence my body, nor how other objects can exert any influence on my soul; or, alternatively, it is this invisible celestial spirit of light and fire that pervades all living things and unifies all natural forces in itself.*³⁷⁰

HERDER seems to expound a 'weak' version of the *Weltseele*-theory as he suggests that this elemental substance of light, fire and heat is the generating principle of organic life on Earth. The entire creation is immersed in this electric fluid, *elektrischer Strom*, like all nature is imbued with the soul of the world in the pananimistic, hylozoistic theories of antiquity, and in the early German Romantic natural scientific hypotheses on the *Weltseele*. HERDER'S doctrine here seems to have exerted a direct influence on BAADER'S idea of the *one* primordial fluid severally modified in nature (cf. *Vom Wärmestoff*, Section 1 of Chapter 9).

All considered, then, HERDER refuses to think God as the soul of the world, but in theology, he just admits of an analogical application of the term *Weltseele* to God, while in natural philosophy, he provides a corporeal substance, a quasi-*Weltseele*, as we may say, to carry and represent the unitary vivifying power of God.

³⁶⁹Entitled "Keine Kraft der Natur ist ohne Organ; das Organ ist aber nie die Kraft selbst, die mittelst jenem wirkt."

³⁷⁰"In den tiefsten Abgründen des Werdens, wo wir keimendes Leben sehen, werden wir das unerforschte und so wirksame Element gewahr; das wir mit den unvollkommenen Namen Licht, Aether, Lebenswärme benennen und das vielleicht das Sensorium des Allerschaffenden ist, dadurch er alles belebet, alles erwärmet. In tausend und Millionen Organe ausgegossen, läutert sich dieser himmlische Feuerstrom immer feiner und feiner: durch sein Vehikulum wirken vielleicht alle Kräfte hienieden und das Wunder der irdischen Schöpfung, die Generation, ist von ihm untrennlich. ... Entweder hat die Wirkung meiner Seele kein Analogon hienieden; und sodenn ist weder zu begreifen, wie sie auf den Körper wirke? noch wie andre Gegenstände auf sie zu wirken vermögen? oder es ist dieser unsichtbare himmlische Licht- und Feuergeist, der alles Lebendige durchfließt und alle Kräfte der Natur vereinigt." (SUPHAN ed., vol. XIII., p. 175. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, HERDER'S emphasis.) The expression "Sensorium des Allerschaffenden" may refer to NEWTON'S theology of space as a *sensorium Dei* in the *Opticks* (see Section 9 of Chapter 6).

With HERDER, we are closing now this lengthy chapter concerning the concept of the world soul in Spinozism and in its interpreters. Before we begin our final discussion of BAADER'S and SCHELLING'S respective theories of the *Weltseele*, we have a last investigation to carry out. We will now look into Giordano BRUNO'S conception of the world soul, *l'anima del mondo*, and into his influence on late German Enlightenment and early German Romanticism.

Chapter 8

The World Soul in Giordano BRUNO's *De la causa, principio et uno* (1584) and *De l'infinito, universo e mondi* (1584). The Revival of BRUNO's Philosophy in Late Eighteenth to Early Nineteenth-Century German Thought

1 *A Philosophical Analysis of BRUNO's Concept of l'anima del mondo and Its Connection with the Notion of an intelletto universale, and with the Concept of God*

On 17 February 1600 in Rome, on the *Campo de' Fiori*, the greatest Italian philosopher of the age as well as an excommunicated Dominican friar, Giordano BRUNO (1548–1600), from the city of Nola in the kingdom of Naples, had his mouth stuffed, was stripped naked, tied to a stake and burnt to ashes by the 'Holy' Inquisition, *Sancta Romana et Universalis Inquisitio*. In his last moments, he refused to look at the crucifix held out to him by his torturers.¹ If his metaphysical system is true, he did not die, for there is no death in BRUNO's philosophy, only accidental transformation of the universal substances.² This conviction certainly gave him the force to endure his 8-year-long incarceration and trial, and to face a particularly brutal version of the capital penalty. He was not a man of compromises. During his process, he admitted to all the philosophical and religious views he had really entertained; despite several temporary retractions, he ultimately did not

¹Cf. eye witness C. SCHOPPE's sarcastic account of BRUNO's execution: "*Hodie igitur ad rogam sive piram deductus, cum Salvatoris crucifixi imago ei iam morituro ostenderetur, torvo etiam vultu aspernatus reiecit; sicque ustulatus misere periit, renunciaturus, credo, in reliquis illis, quos finxit, mundis, quonam pacto homines blasphemi et impii a Romanis tractari soleant*" (FIRPO ed., p. 507). The religious significance of the form of the cross as an ancient Egyptian (Hermetic) symbol in BRUNO's philosophy is incisively discussed by YATES, pp. 351–353. BRUNO admitted to, and was found guilty by the Congregation in, among other things, not believing in the incarnation of Christ with integral faith (cf. the minutes of his interrogations of, respectively, 2 June 1592 and early March 1598, FIRPO ed., pp. 69 and 265; see also p. 497).

²Cf. what he says on the spiritual and material kinds of universal substance in *De l'infinito, universo e mondi* (London, 1584): "*Perchè nè la spiritual sustanza... nè la materiale... possono esser soggette ad alterazione alcuna o passione... e però a tai sustanze non convien moto alcuno, ma a le composte*" (GENTILE ed., vol. 1, p. 372). The perishable accidents of an individual substance, hence, derive from its compound character.

abandon his principles.³ One of his later theses was the identification of the Holy Spirit with the world soul (a doctrine already proffered by medieval Christian theologians like ABÉLARD and WILLIAM OF CONCHES, in a less intolerant epoch).⁴ Hence, at the moment of his execution, he must still have been convinced that his soul would go up to join the omnipresent world soul, i.e., in his later, theological conception, the Holy Spirit.⁵ Tragically, one charge on which his death sentence was probably based was his thesis identifying the Holy Spirit with the universal soul.⁶ In philosophical terms, however, how did he articulate that thesis, one of apparent reconciliation between philosophy and revelational trinitology? And, in the frame of what general metaphysical theory did he dialectically situate it?

We are seeking an answer to these questions by way of a philosophical reconstruction. First, we characterize and analyse BRUNO's *philosophical* concepts of the First Intellect and the world soul.⁷ Then, we describe the magical connection

³On doctrinal aspects of BRUNO's trial, see FIRPO's introductory study in FIRPO ed., especially Chapter XI (*Des rétractations au bûcher, janvier 1598-février 1600*), pp. cli-clxxx. The whole story of BRUNO's return to Italy, delation, and process is told, with an emphasis on BRUNO's particular religious (Hermetic-magical) mission, by YATES, Chapter XIX (*Giordano Bruno: Return to Italy*, pp. 338–359).

⁴Cf. GREGORY, Chapter Three, pp. 123–174. Miss YATES pointed out that a French contemporary of BRUNO, bishop Jacques Davy DU PERRON, also taught that the Holy Spirit has the function of a world soul, in his *Diverses oeuvres*, Paris 1622, p. 684 (cf. YATES, pp. 350–351, see also footnote).

⁵Cf. a Vatican codex entry cited in FIRPO's collection: "...*quello scelerato frate domenico da Nola... diceva che moriva martire et volentieri, et che se ne sarebbe la sua anima ascasa con quel fumo in paradiso*" (*Ibid.*, p. 523). See also FIRPO's comment on these (allegedly) last words of BRUNO: "...*(BRUNO) finit «brûlé vif», conscient de mourir «martyr et bien volontiers, et que son âme monterait avec cette fumée» pour aller se conjuguer avec l'âme de l'univers*" (*Ibid.*, p. clxxx).

⁶Though the full text of the death sentence is lost (only a summary copy survives), it is possible to reconstruct the list of accusations brought against BRUNO, on the basis of the minutes of the process and other materials; see on this FIRPO ed., pp. clxxii–clxxiii and clxxix–clxxx.

⁷For an introduction on the concept of the world soul in BRUNO, see H. R. SCHLETTE, pp. 167–173. Professor SCHLETTE's presentation, however, does not go into great philosophical detail, fails to make the (logical) difference between *intelletto universale* and *anima del mondo*, and consists in large part of citations from the works of others. By contrast, an erudite and nuanced philosophical exposé is offered by P.-H. MICHEL (Chapter IV, pp. 108–125), who considers not only the *De la causa, principio et uno*, but several other important Brunian texts as well, and fruitfully puts the *anima mundi* doctrine in the context of BRUNO's cosmology, psychology and theology. He argues for the transcendence of God in BRUNO's thought. A somewhat less systematic study is that of S. Th. GREENBURG (Chapter I, pp. 19–30). The author, also a translator of *De la causa, principio et uno*, relies almost exclusively on the text of the second dialogue of *De la causa, principio et uno*, in his interpretation of BRUNO's doctrine on the world soul. Thus he does not seem to take notice of the theological facet of the complex Brunian theory concerning *l'anima del mondo*. He makes several comparisons with PLOTINUS' conception of the hypostase of Soul, and advocates full divine immanence in BRUNO's philosophical theology. Though G. AQUILECCHIA's BRUNO-monography (It. orig. 2000, French transl. 2007; see bibliography) concentrates on the biographical, cultural and political facets of BRUNO's life work, it offers important information about FICINO's influence on BRUNO's theory of the universal soul (p. 39), and about BRUNO's idea, in the *Cabala del cavallo pegaseo* (London, 1585) and *De gli eroici furori* (London, 1585), of the relationship between the universal soul and the individual souls (p. 46).

he perceived between the world soul and the individual souls. Next, we discuss his *theological* concept of the soul of the world, that is, the way he identified the world soul with the Holy Spirit. Finally, we try to put his complex idea of the soul of the world within the bounds of his theory of the Absolute. We base our account of BRUNO's concept of the world soul chiefly, but not exclusively, on his metaphysical *opus magnum* entitled, *On the Cause, Principle and One (De la causa, principio et uno, 1584)*,⁸ but we shall cite other texts as well, whenever BRUNO's sometimes tortuous train of thought may be enlightened by them.

De la causa, principio et uno is more than arduous reading for linguistic as well as philosophical reasons, though the latter clearly preponderate. Written in a late twenty-sixth-century Italian with distinctly Neapolitan features, it displays a number of linguistic phenomena never admitted to literary Tuscan (conjugation of infinitives,⁹ dropping of the adverbial ending *mente*,¹⁰ intensifying repetition of certain adverbs,¹¹ etc.). Further, BRUNO employs many words in a no longer existing acceptance (*però*, e.g., still has the etymological denotation 'per hoc', 'because of this'), and spelling is disturbingly unstable throughout his text. BRUNO's often too complex syntax and pompous Baroque style are not the least of the difficulties. But, in fact, all these difficulties are dwarfed by the central problem of how we are to interpret his conceptions of the infinite universe, the universal substance and the relationship between God and nature.

Though BRUNO has a dialectically very involved explanation of how the One relates to the Many of the phenomenal world, the essence of his philosophical notion of the *anima del mondo* is, in a first approach, relatively easily determined on the basis of, first and foremost, the second dialogue of *De la causa, principio et uno*.¹² The third, fourth and fifth dialogues, however, help to situate the philosophical notion of the world soul within the wider context of BRUNO's conceptual network and, therefore, may not be neglected.

The *anima del mondo* is categorized in these dialogues as a *principle, principio*. As BRUNO points out, the term 'principle' can be used in a narrower and in a broader sense. Strictly speaking, 'principle' is that which *internally* participates in

⁸The title page indicates 'Venice' as place of publication, but BRUNO admitted during his interrogations that all his books carrying this inscription had been published in London (see FIRPO ed., p. 63).

⁹E.g., "*esserno*" (third person plur. suffix); AQUILECCHIA ed., p. 32, line 19. Throughout our study, we are using AQUILECCHIA's critical edition of *De la causa*, which is by far the best both in respect of the establishment of the text, and in respect of the philosophical-philological commentary. The classical edition is that of G. GENTILE (Giordano Bruno: *Opere italiane* vol. I. Laterza e Figli, Bari, 1907).

¹⁰E.g., "*altamente, breve(mente) et aperto(mente)*"; *ibid.*, p. 14, lines 2–3.

¹¹E.g., "*insieme insieme*" ('at the same time'); *ibid.*, p. 17, line 11.

¹²The first dialogue reflects on BRUNO's metaphysical treatise *La cena de le ceneri*, the second discusses the concepts of *principio* and *causa, anima del mondo* and *intelletto universale*, the third and the fourth the concept of matter, *materia*, while the fifth expounds BRUNO's doctrine on the One (*l'uno*), and sums up the whole text.

the constitution of a thing, and remains in the effect in the course of causation. 'Principle' *stricte* is thus the material and the formal cause.¹³ 'Principle' *late* is a category that, besides these kinds of causes, extends to the concepts of source, origin, ground and point of departure.¹⁴ On the other hand, 'cause' is an external agent that contributes to the production of a thing, and has an independent existence from the produced thing. Hence, 'cause' is, at least in *De la causa, principio et uno*, the efficient cause and the final cause.¹⁵

On the basis of these distinctions, BRUNO proceeds to the philosophical definition of the world soul by first delimiting it from the 'universal intellect', *intelletto universale*. The universal intellect is the universal physical efficient cause, which is the highest and chief faculty of the soul of the world:

Now as far as the efficient cause is concerned: I am saying that the universal physical efficient cause is the Universal Intellect, which is the first and principal faculty of the Soul of the World; which is in turn the universal form of the world... The Universal Intellect is the intimate, most real and peculiar faculty and potential part of the Soul of the World. The Universal Intellect is an individual being which fills out the entire reality, illuminates the universe, and leads nature to produce her forms in the proper ways, and so it deals with the production of natural things; like our intellect, which deals with the consistent production of rational forms... This Intellect, by infusing and putting something of its own into matter, while it is itself undisturbed and motionless, produces everything that there is.... it is this Intellect that vests matter with all kinds of forms, and that according to the essence and condition of these forms, fashions, forms, and weaves matter together... In our terminology, it is called the internal craftsman because it forms and fashions matter from inside... it is not attached to one single part of matter but it continuously produces all effects in everything...¹⁶

¹³ "...credo che vogliate che principio sia quello che intrinsecamente concorre alla costituzione della cosa, e rimane nell'effetto, come dicono la materia e forma, che rimangono nel composto, o pur gli elementi da quali la cosa viene a comporsi, e ne' quali va a risolversi" (*Dialogo secondo*; FIRPO ed., p. 66). Cf. also BRUNO's *Summa terminorum metaphysicorum* (written 1591, publ. 1595), point V (*Principium*); FIORENTINO et al., eds., vol. I/4, p. 17.

¹⁴ "...non ogni cosa, che è principio, è causa, per che il punto è principio della linea, ma non è causa di quella... Però principio è più general termino che causa" (*Ibid.*, p. 66). See also the *Summa terminorum metaphysicorum*, point VI (*Causa*): "Causa differt a principio, quia omnis causa est principium, non autem omne principium est causa..." (*ibid.*).

¹⁵ "Causa chiami quella che concorre alla produzione delle cose exteriormente, et ha l'essere fuor de la composizione, come è l'efficiente, et il fine, al quale è ordinata la cosa prodotta..." (*Ibid.*, p. 66).

¹⁶ "Or quanto alla causa effetrice: dico l'efficiente fisico universale essere l'intelletto universale, che è la prima e principal facultà de l'anima del mondo, la quale è forma universale di quello... L'intelletto universale è l'intima più reale, e propria facultà e parte potenziale de l'anima del mondo{.} Questo è uno medesimo, che empie il tutto, illumina l'universo et indirizza la natura a produrre le sue specie come conviene, e cossí ha rispetto alla produzione di cose naturali: come il nostro intelletto, alla congrua produzione di specie razionali. ... Questo intelletto, infondendo e porgendo qualche cosa del suo nella materia: mantenendosi lui quieto et immobile, produce il tutto. ...lui è quello che impregna la materia di tutte forme, e secondo la ragione, e condizion di quelle, la viene a figurare, formare, intessere... Da noi si chiama artefice interno, perché forma la materia, e la figura da dentro... non è attaccato ad una sola parte de la materia: ma opra continuamente tutto in tutto..." (*Dialogo secondo*; AQUILECCHIA ed., p. 67; M. Vassányi's translation).

There is thus a hierarchy of faculties (potencies) within the world soul, although, as we shall see, this does not destroy its fundamental unity. By virtue of the above definition, the universal intellect as an efficient cause is the universal external agent which brings about, controls and directs the appearance of all natural forms in matter. It pervades the whole extension of the physical universe, but it remains a numerical unit, which is not linked up specifically with any part of matter. In fact, it stays immobile, while it operates everywhere.

At first sight, it would seem from our citation that there is not much that is strictly intellectual or rational in the nature of the universal intellect. Indeed, the universal intellect may even appear qualitatively lower-ranking than the human intellect, which, for its part, creates at least 'rational forms' ("*specie razionali*"). But BRUNO's perspective here is the converse of this, as it may be argued that the universal intellect deals with the internal forms of actually existing things (realities), whereas the human mind only considers mental, i.e., not real, entities (potentialities).

A further problem is, then, how the universal intellect, an *external* efficient cause, may operate internally ("*da dentro*") in matter as an 'internal craftsman', "*artefice interno*". But 'externality' in BRUNO's metaphysics can only be a *relative* concept, insofar as his absolute metaphysical position is the identity of primordial matter with the formal principle and with the efficient cause. This implies *a fortiori* the essential identity of the internal form with the efficient cause ("*la forma per esser medesima con la già detta causa*").¹⁷ It may be philosophically legitimate to assert the identity of internal form and efficient cause insofar as the latter is conceived as a part (faculty) of the former. Hence, when BRUNO differentiates between efficient cause and formal principle, he has in mind a logical rather than an ontological difference between different aspects of the same thing. Lastly, as we shall see, BRUNO in his later *Lampas triginta statuarum* will fit this philosophical conception of cause and principle into the trinitological scheme constituted by the Father (*mens innominabilis*), the Son (*primus intellectus*), and the Holy Spirit (*anima mundi*). The trinitological scheme will resolve, with unorthodox theological means, the problem of the consubstantiality of the *intelletto universale* (the *Verbum*) and the *anima del mondo* (the *Spiritus*).

The formal principle, the substantial form of informed matter, is, then, the world soul, *l'anima del mondo*. This is, as we have seen, the higher (divine) entity the supreme potency of which is the universal intellect. While BRUNO conceives of the universal intellect as the divine power that brings the substantial forms from potentiality to actuality, he sees the world soul as the universal internal form ("*forma universale*"), and visualizes their relationship (logical difference but ontological identity) with the image of the steersman in the ship:

I am saying that this is not inconvenient if we consider that the soul is in the body in the same manner as the steersman is in the ship; because the steersman, insofar as he is moved together with the ship, is part of the ship; but insofar as he directs and moves the ship, is

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

*not considered as a part of it, but as a distinct efficient cause; in the same manner, when the Soul of the Universe is considered as an animating and informing power, it appears as an intrinsic and formal part of the universe; but when it is considered as a controlling and governing agent, it is not a part nor a principle, but a cause.*¹⁸

As the steersman in the ship controls and directs the ship's motion, so the universal intellect controls and directs the production of natural forms throughout the physical universe as an efficient cause, which is consequently independent from what it controls. But, as the steersman happens to be *in* the ship, so the universal intellect, under the aspect of the world soul of which it is a faculty, is intrinsically *within* the universe as the universal internal form. Efficient and effect may thus be regarded as the same subject under different (intrinsic and extrinsic) aspects, or in different functions (“*il medesimo soggetto può essere principio e causa di cose naturali*”).¹⁹

The specific functions of the world soul in BRUNO's conception are giving life, vegetative and sensitive powers, as well as beauty to, in a first instance, the world as a whole:

*If, then, spirit, soul, life is found in all things and fills out all matter in several different degrees, then it is the real act and the real form of all things. Therefore, the Soul of the World is the formal constitutive principle of the universe, and of whatever the universe includes; I mean, if life is found in all things, then the soul is the form of all things; it controls matter in all respects and is prevalent in the compounds, operates the composition and the consistency of the parts.*²⁰

The world soul is thus omnipresent and all-pervasive. It animates all physical beings according to the respective degrees they occupy on the ontological scale, whereby everything in the universe is animate (“*tutte le cose sono animate*”).²¹ Further, the world soul *rules* over matter, controls the processes of composition so that the individual substances of the world are organically compounded and built. As a unificatory principle, it assures the cohesion of physical parts – to a degree, its functions overlap here with those of the universal intellect.

¹⁸“*Dico che questo non è inconveniente considerando che l'anima è nel corpo come nochiere nella nave: il qual nochiere, in quanto vien mosso insieme con la nave, è parte di quella; considerato in quanto che la governa e muove, non se intende parte, ma come distinto efficiente: cossì l'anima de l'universo in quanto che anima, et informa, viene ad esser parte intrinseca e formale di quello: ma come che drizza, e governa, non è parte, non ha raggione di principio, ma di causa*” (*Ibid.*, p. 73; M. Vassányi's translation).

¹⁹AQUILECCHIA ed.; p. 71.

²⁰“*Se dunque lo spirito, la anima, la vita si ritrova in tutte le cose, e secondo certi gradi empie tutta la materia: viene certamente ad essere il vero atto, e la vera forma de tutte le cose. L'anima dunque del mondo, è il principio formale costitutivo de l'universo, e di ciò che in quello si contiene: dico che se la vita si trova in tutte le cose, l'anima viene ad esser forma di tutte le cose: quella per tutto è presidente alla materia, e signoreggia nelli composti, effettua la composizione, e consistenzia de le parti*” (*Ibid.*, pp. 78–79; M. Vassányi's translation). See also Dialogues 1–4 of *De l'infinito*, in GENTILE ed., vol. I, pp. 298, 302, 348 and 378.

²¹Cf. AQUILECCHIA ed.; p. 74.

As far as the relationship of the individual souls to the world soul is concerned, BRUNO accepts the Plotinian thesis about the superiority of the *anima del mondo*. The world soul is not so strictly bound to its cosmic body as the human soul is bound to its particular body, it moves freer upwards on the scale of the hypostases and undergoes no affections from its body, while it still belongs to the same universal material substrate. As BRUNO says with implicit reference to PLOTINUS:

*there is a great difference between how the Soul of the World and how our soul rules. The Soul of the World dominates the world in a manner that it is not fastened to it... It does not undergo any influence from other things or together with other things, it ascends to the supernal realities without any obstacle, it vests the body with life and perfection without receiving any imperfection from it; and still, it is eternally joined to the same subject. It is clear, however, that our soul is of a different character.*²²

Despite the fact that the individual soul is more disposed than the world soul to experience affections arising from its body, it is still capable of 'transcending' the physical limits its body seems to enforce on it. This transcending may happen by virtue of the *magical* connection of every single thing with every other thing in the universe. There is, BRUNO argues, a supra-sensible but intimate communion and communication between the different spheres of existence along the magical ladder that connects the lower ontological grades, through the medium of the world, ultimately with God: "*a Deo est descensus per mundum ad animal, animalis vero est ascensus per mundum ad Deum*".²³ This magical connection explains the phenomenon of universal sympathy, the Plotinian *σύμπνοια μία ἐν τῷ παντί* (II/3:7, 17), whereby the eye can perceive objects from the distance without the mediation of the least physical motion, and the soul can spiritually spread out beyond the bounds of its individual body, getting into immediate contact with the world soul by virtue of their contiguity. As BRUNO explains in his undated manuscript, *De magia*:

It is manifest that all soul and spirit has some continuity with the Spirit of the Universe, so that it is understood that it is, and is included, not only in the space where it really feels, where it animates a body, but – by virtue of its essence and substance – it is also infinitely diffused, as many Platonists and Pythagoreans thought. It is thus that by its vision, it perceives very distant forms immediately, without the intervention of any motion... Further, the soul itself, together with its excellence, is somehow present to the entire universe, insofar as it is a substance that is not delimited by the body it animates, although it is tied to it, attached to it... Since the soul of everyone has a continuity with the Soul of the Universe,

²² "...è gran differenza dal modo con cui quella (scil. l'anima del mondo) e questa (scil. l'anima nostra) governa. Quella non come alligata regge il mondo di tal sorte, che la medesima (Acc.) non leghi ciò (Nom.) che (Acc.) prende (scil. l'anima del mondo), quella non patisce da l'altre cose né con l'altre cose, quella senza impedimento s'inalza alle cose superne, quella donando la vita e perfezione al corpo non riporta da esso imperfezione alcuna: e però eternamente è congiunta al medesimo soggetto. Questa (scil. l'anima nostra) poi è manifesto che è di contraria condizione" (Ibid., p. 72; M. VASSÁNYI's translation). As AQUILECCHIA's footnote points out, this statement of BRUNO's is an *ad sensum* translation of FICINO's Latin rendering of a passage of the Plotinian treatise II/9:7.

²³ *De magia*, manuscript; FIORENTINO *et al.*, eds., vol. III, p. 402.

*the absurdity which concerns bodies does not arise here, because bodies are mutually impenetrable, whereas such spiritual substances have a different constitution, being as it were innumerable lamps burning at the same time, constituting one single light without covering or weakening or shutting out each others' light.*²⁴

The individual soul is thus the substantial form of its body in a manner that hardly allows it to be the internal perfection, *entelechia*, of the correlated body any more, albeit BRUNO argues that even in its 'spread-out' condition, the soul maintains a special connection with its particular body ("*eidem obligata, adstricta*"). By its faculty of unbounded ("*in immensum*") spiritual extension, and by virtue of its immediate contiguity with the world soul, the individual soul may pervade the entire universe. In fact, however, BRUNO speaks not about a simple contiguity (adjacency) but *continuity* here ("*animus cuiusque unius continuationem habeat cum anima universi*"). This means that the transition from the individual souls (in)to the universal soul is seamless, and that they, therefore, enjoy a degree of substantial identity with the world soul.

At this point, as we are treating the difficult relationship between the world soul and the individual human souls, it is convenient to discuss BRUNO's theological idea that the soul of the world corresponds to the Holy Spirit in a revelational trinitological scheme. BRUNO propounded this conciliatory thesis in the relatively late manuscript, *The Lantern of the Thirty Statues* (*Lampas triginta statuarum*), and also orally several times during his interrogations.

The *Lampas triginta statuarum* (1589–1591) is a series of philosophical meditations concerning thirty 'statues', fundamental philosophical concepts, the first six of which (*Chaos, Orcus, Nox* on the one hand, and *Mens, Primus intellectus, Spiritus universonum* on the other hand) are said to be '*infigurabilia*', lacking an adequate sensual image. On the upper end of the ontological scale, the triad *mens–primus intellectus–spiritus universonum/anima mundi* clearly represents the Trinity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Father²⁵ is described essentially as the unnamable, '*absolutely independent plenitude*' ("*plenitudo ubique tota et ab omnibus absoluta*"),²⁶ whom no direct intellectual vision of a finite understanding may reach. The First Intellect – the philosophical parallel of which is the *intelletto*

²⁴"...manifestum est omnem animam et spiritum habere quandam continuitatem cum spiritu universi, ut non solum ibi intelligatur esse et includi, ubi sentit, ubi vivificat, sed etiam in immensum per suam essentiam et substantiam sit diffusus, ut multi Platoniorum et Pythagoricorum senserunt. Hinc est quod species distantissimas visu apprehendit subito absque motu... Porro animus ipse cum sua virtute praesens est quodammodo universo, utpote talis substantia, quae non est inclusa corpori per ipsam viventi, quamvis eidem obligata, adstricta. ...cum animus cuiusque unius continuationem habeat cum anima universi, non sequitur ea impossibilitas, quae fertur in corporibus, quae non se mutuo penetrent; siquidem in substantiis spiritualibus huiusmodi alia est ratio, veluti si innumerae lampades sint accensae, quae concurrunt in virtutem unius luminis, non accidit alia alius lumen impediat vel retundat vel excludat" (*Ibid.*, pp. 408–410, underlining added; M. VASSÁNYI's translation). Cf. MICHEL's analysis on p. 116 of his book.

²⁵BRUNO himself calls the *mens* '*Pater*', the First Intellect '*filius*' in the examined passages. The First Intellect is also referred to as the "*verbum suum* (scil. *mentis*)" on p. 54.

²⁶*Lampas triginta statuarum*, chapter "*De primo intellectu*"; *ibid.*, p. 44.

universale of *De la causa* – appears as a ‘unity which communicates itself with everything’ (“*unitas ubique tota, sed omnibus se communicans*”). The Son is thus the generative principle, the spiritual world of the archetypal ideas (“*mundus primus archetypus idealis*”).²⁷ But it is the analysis of the third infigurable reality, the Universal Spirit (*spiritus universorum*), also called *anima mundi*, that has to absorb our attention in the context of the present investigation.

The *anima mundi* concept of the *Lampas triginta statuarum* corresponds to that of the *anima del mondo* in *De la causa, principio et uno* to a very high degree, but its description in the *Lampas* offers more detail about how we have to conceive of the relationship between it and the individual souls, and also about how it genetically and substantially relates to the essence of God, or God the Father, and to the First Intellect.²⁸ The spirit/soul (BRUNO does not make a terminological difference here) of the universe receives the same attributes as in the metaphysical dialogues: it is omnipresent, and operates in everything, directed by the First Intellect.²⁹

BRUNO takes, decisively, a position on the relationship ‘universal soul–individual souls’ in points XVII and XXII of the chapter concerning the Holy Spirit–*spiritus universorum*–*anima universi*. He argues, much in a Plotinian vein (cf. *Enn.* IV/9), that it is conceivable that the *anima universi* is one and many at the same time:

XVII. While we affirm that in point of substance, the Soul of the World is indivisible, we allow that it easily multiplies, in the same manner as one voice, though it is indivisible, is heard in innumerable places, insofar as it can multiply according to the several hearing subjects and points of reverberation in the air, while it is heard everywhere in its entirety, nowhere divided... XXII. As matter is the cause of plurality, and form, of unity, we say that the Flash of the Divinity (*fulgorem divinitatis*, i.e., the Soul of the World, see notes 799 and 800) is a spirit which is one by itself and which constitutes a unit... yet, as it is (the form), it operates in the extended and material universe, in which, as it receives division and distributes matter into a multiplicity of parts, there arises a plurality, so that the soul which appears as a whole in the whole universe and as one in the one universe, becomes – when its body has broken up into, so to say, many fragments, and has multiplied into several numerically different realities – a multitude of souls, as many as there are subjects, whereby there will be produced just as many living beings or at least animate bodies... Which happens approximately in the same way as – if there was one sun and one seamless mirror – you could contemplate the one sun in the entire mirror; but should that mirror break up and multiply into innumerable fragments, we shall see the image of the whole and entire sun in all the fragments, although either because of their smallness or the distortion

²⁷Cf. point XXV of the same chapter: “*Intellectus dicitur centrum secundi mundi, mundus primus archetypus idealis, in tota sphaera ubique totus et ubique centrum*” (*Ibid.*, p. 52).

²⁸Cf. “*Sicut a centro plenitudinis prodit lux, a luce fulgor, ita a mente processit intellectus, ab intellectu procedit affectus seu amor* (the Holy Spirit, *anima mundi*); *mens super omnia sedet, intellectus omnia videt et distribuit, amor omnia fabricat et disponit...*” (Chapter “*De lumine seu spiritu universorum*”; *ibid.*, p. 53).

²⁹Cf. “*...mox ad secundi universi constitutionem primus intellectus concipit sui ideam et in simplici illa specie ideas universorum, quarum specie delectatus quasi calore quodam percitus spiritum producit, qui ab eo procedit veluti a luce fulgor; hic sane fulgor implet universa, in omnia se totus diffundit, et sicut intellectus intelligit omnia in omnibus, ita iste affectat omnia in omnibus, operatur omnia in omnibus; unde anima mundi dicitur et spiritus universorum...*” (*Ibid.*, p. 54).

of the representation, there will appear a confused image or almost nothing of that Universal Form (scil. of the Holy Spirit–World Soul) in some fragments, though it is nevertheless there, but in an inextricable manner”³⁰

Though the physical sound is *per se* one in number, it becomes many in the several subjects who hear it: it does not lose its principle of identity. Although it is thus not divided, still it is multiplied, and gives rise to divided existence. It keeps the principle of its own unity (identity), but is, at the same time, the principle of a multiplicity (difference). It is a single whole throughout the entire physical space it fills, just like the world soul is a numerical unit throughout its cosmic body; but it is individualized in the particular hearing subjects, just like the world soul informs the particular animate beings.

The Holy Spirit–world soul is, hence, one *and* many. On the one hand, it is the unifying spiritual form of matter, while matter, on the other hand, is extended and is the cause of difference. The material world, in BRUNO's second argument, may be seen from above, so to say, from the perspective of the *anima mundi*, and then it appears as a homogeneous whole, unified by its substantial form. But it may be contemplated from below as well, from the perspective of the several individual beings of which the universe consists, and which constitute, in a gigantic seamless mosaic, the entire structure of the world. When we consider the world as a homogeneous whole, we perceive a single soul in it (the Holy Spirit–world soul, which is the universal form). But when we consider it as a distributive unity, we see the several seemingly distinct, individual souls. In either case, however, we see the same soul now as one, now as many; now as implicated, now as explicated.

BRUNO formulated the same thesis of the identity of the Holy Spirit with the world soul more explicitly, but touching only cursorily upon the relationship of the individual souls with the world soul, during his interrogation in Venice on 2 June 1592. The minutes of this interrogation are particularly interesting from a philosophical as well as theological point of view, since BRUNO presented here an

³⁰“XVII. *Animam universi secundum substantiam, dum indivisibilem dicimus, facile multiplicabilem concedimus, quemadmodum vox una in innumerabilibus locis indivisibilis quidem auditur, multiplicabilis vero esse potest per subiecta auditus et loca repercussionum aëris, dum interim ubique tota, nusquam vero divisa auditur...* XXII. *Cum materia sit causa multitudinis et divisionis, forma vero unitatis, dicimus fulgorem divinitatis spiritum esse per se unum et facere unum (...), tamen quia {forma} est, operatur in universo extento et materiali, quo quidem divisionem recipiente et in partium multiplicationem materiam distribuentem accidit multitudo, ut ea anima quae in toto tota et in uno una videatur, iam, in multa veluti fragmenta distracto corpore et in diversas hypostases numerales multiplicato, multae fiunt animae, sicut multa sunt subiecta, et totidem producuntur animalia, vel saltem nihilominus animata corpora, quamvis non ubique anima speciem viresque suas exerat, unde quaedam sine anima a quibusdam iudicantur. Quod ita ferme est, quemadmodum, si unus sit sol et unum continuum speculum, in toto illo unum solem licebit contemplari; quod si accidat speculum illud perfringi et {in} innumerabiles portiones multiplicari, in omnibus portionibus totam repraesentari videbimus et integram solis effigiem, in quibusdam vero fragmentis vel propter exiguitatem vel propter infigurationis indispositionem aliquid confusum vel prope nihil de illa forma universali (scil. of the world soul) apparebit, cum tamen nihilominus insit, inexplicata tamen” (Ibid., pp. 57 and 59; transl. by M. VASSÁNYI). {forma} our conjecture; {in} editors' correction.*

exposé of his fundamental metaphysics with reference to the theological doctrines the Inquisition believed to represent and to defend. He said especially much about God's vivifying power as immediately present in the physical universe, and about the difficult-to-determine relationship (transcendence or immanence?) between the divinity and nature, in the following terms:

I suppose that in this universe there is a universal Providence, in virtue of which everything is alive, grows and moves and keeps its perfection; and I suppose that this Providence exists in two manners, one in which the soul is present in the body, being entire in the entire body and entire in any part, and this I call the nature, the shadow and the trace of the Divinity; and in another, unspeakable manner, in which God is in all and beyond all by virtue of His essence, presence and power; not as a part, not as a soul but in an inexplicable manner. Further, in my understanding, all attributes are one and the same thing in the Divinity... I understand that there are three attributes, Power, Wisdom and Bounty, or in other words, Mind, Intellect and Love, so that the things receive, first, existence by virtue of the Mind, then the ordered and distinct character of their existence by virtue of the Intellect, and, third, their concord and symmetry by virtue of Love. In my understanding, this is in all and beyond all: as there is nothing that does not share in existence and as existence is not without essence..., so nothing can be devoid of the divine presence; and in this manner, I admit of distinction in the divinity intellectually and not in respect of substantial truth... As for the Holy Spirit considered as a third divine person, I could not understand it in the manner in which we must believe it; but I understood it in the Pythagorean manner – in concord with the modality espoused by Salomon – as the Soul of the Universe or the assistant to the Universe, according to the dictum of Salomon's Book of Wisdom: 'Spiritus Domini replevit orbem terrarum, et hoc quod continet omnia,' which appears completely conformable to the Pythagorean doctrine expounded by Virgil in the sixth chant of the Aeneid... From this Spirit, then, which is said to be the life of the universe, there comes, in my philosophy, the life and soul of everything that has a soul and life, which I therefore understand to be immortal; just like in the case of bodies. In respect of substance, all bodies are immortal since death is but separation and concretion...³¹

³¹“...in questo universo metto una provvidenza universal, in virtù della quale ogni cosa vive, vegeta et si move et sta nella sua perfettione; et la intendo in due maniere, l'una nel modo con cui presente è l'anima nel corpo, tutta in tutto et tutta in qual si voglia parte, et questo chiamo natura, ombra, et vestigio della divinità; l'altra nel modo ineffabile col quale Iddio per essentia, presentia et potentia è in tutto e sopra tutto, non come parte, non come anima, ma in modo inesplabile. Doppoi, nella divinità intendo tutti li attributi esser una medesima cosa...; capisco tre attributi, potentia, sapientia et bontà, overamente mente, intelletto et amore, col quale le cose hanno prima l'essere <per> raggion della mente, doppoi l'ordinato essere et distinto per raggione dell'intelletto, terzo la concordia et simitria per raggione dell'amore. Questo intendo essere in tutto et sopra tutto: come nessuna cosa è senza participatione dell'essere et l'essere non è senza l'essentia..., cusi dalla divina presentia niuna cosa può esser esenta; et in questo modo per via di ragione et non per via di substantiale verità intendo distintione nella divinità. ... quanto al Spirito divino per una terza persona, non ho possuto capire secondo il modo che si deve credere; ma secondo il modo pittagorico, conforme a quel modo che mostra Salomone, ho inteso come anima dell'universo, overo assistente all'universo, iuxta illud dictum Sap[ientiae] Salomonis: «Spiritus Domini replevit orbem terrarum, et hoc quod continet omnia», che tutto conforme pare alla dottrina pittagorica esplicata da Vergilio nel sesto dell'Eneida... Da questo spirito poi, che è detto vita dell'universo, intendo nella mia filosofia provenire la vita et l'anima a ciascuna cosa che have anima et vita, la qual però intendo esser immortale; come anco alli corpi. Quanto alla loro substantia, tutti sono immortali, non essendo altro morte che divisione et congregatione...” (FIRPO, ed., pp. 67–72, underlining added; transl. by M. VASSÁNYI). In the middle of the citation, BRUNO does not cite the three last words of *Sap.* I:7. See the complete line in our main text.

As concerns his conception of the Holy Spirit, BRUNO recurs to his general strategy during the interrogations to prove his doctrinal innocence, as he points out that the *anima mundi*-theory is common (pagan as well as Christian) cultural property. The *anima mundi*-theory is the doctrine of the highly authoritative VIRGIL, but a version of it seems included even in the (deuterocanonical or apocryphal) Old Testament (*Wisdom* I:5–7),³² where King Salomon praises the wisdom of God, naming it ‘Holy Spirit’ (“*sanctus spiritus*”, “ἅγιον πνεῦμα”, line 5), or ‘Spirit of God’ (“*spiritus Domini*”, “πνεῦμα κυρίου”, line 7), terms synonymous in BRUNO’s theological terminology with the world soul:

*for the holy spirit of instruction flees deceitfulness,
recoils from unintelligent thoughts...*

...

*For the spirit of the Lord fills the world,
and that which holds everything together knows every word said.*³³

In parts of his confession, here uncited, BRUNO clearly states his reason for identifying the Holy Spirit with the world soul: he was unable to believe the ecclesiastically endorsed dogma of three persons in one divine essence, so he accepted only the thesis of substantial unity and philosophically reinterpreted the trinitological doctrine.³⁴ Since he also doubted the Incarnation of the Word, he might be seen in a dogmatic respect as a philosopher with unitarian tendencies in theology.

³²Regrettably, there is no reference to this (deuterocanonical) Biblical passage in the Old Testament chapter (pp. 92–94) of H. R. SCHLETTE’s *Weltseele*-book, though it is otherwise composed with great theological erudition and though it does treat another passage of the *Book of Wisdom*. SCHLETTE thus rejects the possibility that there may be a point of textual-conceptual connection between the world soul theory and Old Testament theology: “*Wenn in der hellenistisch beeinflussten sogenannten Weisheitsliteratur formuliert wird, Gott habe »alles« nach »Maß, Zahl und Gewicht« geordnet (Weish. 11, 20), so handelt es sich um jener positiven Qualifikation, die schon der priesterschriftliche Schöpfungsbericht der geschaffenen Welt anerkannte, keineswegs aber um eine Präsenz Gottes in der Schöpfung, die man im Unterschied zur Souveränität oder Transzendenz Gottes als seine »Immanenz« bezeichnen könnte. Jeder Anklang an »Pantheismus« wird in dieser Überlieferung bewußt vermieden bzw. abgewiesen*” (SCHLETTE, p. 94).

³³Translation of the (Catholic) *New Jerusalem Bible*. Since the *Book of Wisdom* is deuterocanonical (or, in a Protestant terminology, apocryphal), it is not included in the (Protestant) *King James Bible*. The Vulgate text reads: “*sanctus enim spiritus disciplinae effugiet fictum / et auferet se a cogitationibus quae sunt sine intellectu... / ... / quoniam spiritus Domini replevit orbem terrarum et hoc quod continet omnia scientiam habet vocis.*” The LXX say: “ἅγιον γὰρ πνεῦμα παιδείας φεύξεται δόλον / καὶ ἀπαναστήσεται ἀπὸ λογισμῶν ἀσυνέτων... / ... / ὅτι πνεῦμα κυρίου πεπλήρωκεν τὴν οἰκουμένην, / καὶ τὸ συνέχον τὰ πάντα γνώσιν ἔχει φωνῆς.” Since the *Book of Wisdom* had been written in Greek in Hellenistic times, there is no Hebrew original.

³⁴“...*ho in effetto dubitato circa il nome di persona del Figliuolo et del Spirito santo, non intendendo queste due persone distinte del Padre se non nella maniera che ho detto de sopra parlando filosoficamente, et assignando l’intelletto del {editor: al} Padre per il Figliuolo et l’amore per il Spirito santo, senza conoscer questo nome persona...*” (FIRPO ed., p. 73).

In the last paragraph of the above citation, he briefly mentions his idea that the Holy Spirit, as the world soul, vivifies (*vita*) and animates (*anima*) the living beings, which are, by virtue of this divine animation, immortal. The Holy Spirit is the 'life and soul of the universe'. The immortality of soul as well as body ('*anco alli corpi*') is further emphasized with reference to the indestructibility of the universal substances, which undergo accidental transformation only. On BRUNO's theory, the individual soul loses its connection with a particular piece of matter at the moment of decomposition, but it remains part of the universal form, the Holy Spirit–world soul. The material substance of its previous body will receive another substantial form, while it, as a part of the universal soul, will animate another part of matter.

We have now examined BRUNO's philosophical and theological conceptions of the world soul in some detail. We have also seen how *l'anima del mondo* relates to the individual human souls. But the greatest interpretational question is: how does it relate to BRUNO's God in philosophical terms? The world soul is the universal form, hence, it is immanent in the matter it animates. If the divine essence is indivisible (as BRUNO maintained, e.g., during his interrogations and elsewhere), and if there is no substantial difference between the divine mind (God the Father), the first intellect (God the Son), and the soul of the universe (the Holy Spirit), then the conclusion seems to follow that God is ultimately the substantial form of the one infinite universe. This interpretation could explain Teofilo's hymnic philosophical monologue about the universe ("*È dunque l'universo uno, infinito, immobile etc.*") at the beginning of Dialogue Five of *De la causa*. On this interpretative hypothesis, the informed substance of the immense, living universe, in which potency and act, finite and infinite coincide, is God *simpliciter*, whereby the *anima del mondo* will be an only logically distinguishable, immanent aspect of the divinity as the universal substantial form. God is, in this case, not an *ens extramundanum*, not a transcendent being, but the totality of the infinite universe itself, *ἓν καὶ πᾶν*. We may call this the classical interpretation of BRUNO's metaphysics.

But there are several problems with this classical hypothesis. We come systematically across statements in different Brunonian texts that explicitly preserve the transcendence of God. Among other things, BRUNO stresses that God is unknowable for the discursive faculty of reason.³⁵ More importantly, while he asserts God to be 'in' everything, he also says that God is, at the same time, 'above' (outside) everything (an echo of the Plotinian *ἐπέκεινα πάντων* in V/1:6, 13). In *De l'infinito*, he adds that God, conceived as the Infinite Supreme Good, is incorporeal: "*L'infinito buono... è incorporeo.*"³⁶

³⁵Cf. *De la causa, principio et uno*, Second dialogue: "*Ecco dunque che della divina sostanza, sì per essere infinita, sì per essere lontanissima da quelli effetti che sono l'ultimo termine del corso della nostra discorsiva facultade: non possiamo conoscer nulla se non per modo di vestigio...*" (AQUILECCHIA ed., p. 63). The limit of philosophical contemplation is reached with the concept of the *anima mundi*; cf. the famed passage in the Fourth dialogue: "*Possete quindi montar al concetto, non dico del summo et ottimo principio escluso della nostra considerazione: ma de l'anima del mondo, come è atto di tutto, e potenza di tutto, et è tutta in tutto: onde al fine (dato che sieno innumerabili individui) ogni cosa è uno; et il conoscere questa unità è il scopo e termine di tutte le filosofie e contemplazioni naturali*" (*Ibid.*, pp. 134–135; underlining added).

³⁶*De l'infinito*, First Dialogue, in GENTILE ed., vol. 1, p. 286. See also *ibid.*, 287.

As concerns the indivisibility of the divine substance, Bruno affirms, even in his above-cited theological confession, that all divine attributes constitute “one and the same thing:” “*nella divinità intendo tutti li attributi esser una medesima cosa.*”

The divine essence is thus numerically one substance,³⁷ but, as BRUNO specified (consistently in *De la causa* and during his interrogations), it exists simultaneously in two essentially different, though related orders of existence: “*in tutto*”, “within everything”, and “*sopra tutto*”, “above everything”. It is, on the one hand, the very substance and internal constitution of the infinite universe, but, on the other hand, it is a supra-essential, apparently transcendent reality, which “*super omnia sedet*” (see footnote 799 above). On the ontologically lower, manifestative level, the triune God is *in* the world as the animating power, and is accessible to the scientific contemplation of discursive reason, in His effects, “*per modo di vestigio*”. But insofar as God is the cause and source of being, even the Cause of Causes, *causa causarum*, He dwells in an inaccessible region of existence. On this interpretative hypothesis, the Brunonian God *qua* transcendent efficient cause exists in an ‘*implicated*’ manner, as the One or the Absolute beyond being, while He is also His own effect, the infinite universe, in an ‘*explicated*’ way. This interpretation could account for the transcendent momentum in BRUNO’s concept of God, who seems to preserve His ontological real difference from ‘Creation’ by virtue of the principle of causality.³⁸ We might recognize the Plotinian concept of the One as ‘the potentiality of all’, “*τὸ ἔν δύναμις πάντων*” (V/1:7, 9–10), in BRUNO’s perhaps decisive metaphysical statements about the *sumum ens*:

*It is thus in the one Supreme Being, in which the act coincides with the potency; which can be absolutely all, and is all that which it can be; it is, in an implicated manner, one, immense, infinite and it contains all existence; and it is there in an explicated manner in these perceptible bodies and in the distinct potency and act we find in them.... That unity (that is, God implicatedly) is all, it is not explicated and is not divided or distinguished numerically... but it is enveloping and inclusive.*³⁹

³⁷Cf. also “*Quanto alla seconda persona io dico che realmente ho tenuto essere in essentia una con la prima, et cusì la terza; perché, essendo indistinte in essentia, non possono patire inegualità, perché tutti li attributi che convengono al Padre convengono anco al Figliuol et Spirito santo...*” (FIRPO ed., p. 73).

³⁸Cf. *De la causa, principio et uno*, Second dialogue: “*Diciamo Dio prima causa, in quanto che le cose tutte son da lui distinte come lo effetto da l’efficiente, la cosa prodotta dal producente*” (AQUILECCHIA ed., p. 65; underlining added).

³⁹“*Talmente ne l’uno ente summo, nel quale è indifferente l’atto dalla potenza, il quale può essere tutto assolutamente, et è tutto quello che può essere; è complicatamente uno, immenso, infinito, che comprende tutto lo essere: et è esplicitamente in questi corpi sensibili, et in la distinta potenza et atto che veggiamo in essi.... Quella unità è tutto la quale non è esplicita, non è sotto distribuzione e distinzione di numero, e tal singularità che tu intendereste forse; ma che è complicante e comprendente*” (*De la causa*, Fifth dialogue; *ibid.*, pp. 150 and 162–163, respectively. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI). See also the following statement in the First dialogue of *De l’infinito*: “*Lui (that is, God as the Absolute) è tutto l’infinito complicatamente e totalmente; ma l’universo è tutto in tutto... esplicitamente, e non totalmente...*” (GENTILE ed., vol. 1, pp. 290–291).

In the transcendent One, there is no distinction, no number, no plurality; but the One is the *principle* of distinction, number and plurality. The One or the Absolute as the Cause of Causes is the entire spectrum of being in a potential form, 'implicatedly', the infinite universe in a transcendent bud. In its 'explicated' form, the One becomes the Many of the phenomenal world, which is informed by the Holy Spirit-world soul as the universal substantial form, and controlled by the Son-First Intellect as the universal producer of forms, the '*vis intellectualis omnibus insita*' and '*mundi faber intrinsecus agens et fabrefaciens*'.⁴⁰ Summarized as a metaphysical principle, *nihil est in mundo, quod non fuerit prius in Deo*. In the *Lampas*, only the Father seems to receive attributes expressing transcendency and difference from the finite things: He "*is independent from everything*",⁴¹ "*abides beyond all*",⁴² and "*is not communicable with a multitude, by virtue of His nature*".⁴³ Hence, in revelational trinitological terms, the Father may perhaps be regarded as the Absolute, the transcendent Godhead in BRUNO'S conception.

At the end of this particular investigation, our conclusion is that a transcendent interpretation of BRUNO'S metaphysics seems more justified in the mirror of the sources than the traditional reductionist-identificationist thesis. Second, we may point out that SCHELLING, author of *Bruno* (1802), the "*Freiheitsschrift*" (1809), and the fragmentary *Weltalter* (1811–14), interpreted BRUNO'S general metaphysical conception in a similar vein, and was deeply inspired by it. Lastly, though BRUNO clearly considered himself a philosopher rather than a theologian, and although he unquestionably attached more value to rational philosophical research than to religious belief, he appears to have made a true intellectual effort to reconcile the philosophical theory of the world soul with the revelational trinitological concept of the Holy Spirit. Still, the Inquisition did not appreciate this (among many other things), and preferred to burn BRUNO the metaphysician to save BRUNO the believer.

Following this hypothetical interpretation of BRUNO'S speculative theology, let us now consider, with special respect to the *anima mundi*-theory, how it was appreciated by some leading thinkers of the German Enlightenment and early German Romanticism: JACOBI, S. MAIMON and SCHELLING.

2 BRUNO'S Influence on JACOBI (Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza, 2nd ed. 1789, Beylage I), S. MAIMON (Auszug aus Jordan Bruno von Nola, 1793) and SCHELLING (Bruno, 1802)

It was BRUNO'S above-sketched theology of the divine presence, "*divina presentia*" which proved so attractive to the philosophers of late German Enlightenment and early German Romanticism. The Brunonian doctrine of the omnipresence of God,

⁴⁰ *Lampas triginta statuarum, De primo intellectu*, FIORENTINO et al. eds., vol. III, p. 52.

⁴¹ "*omnibus absoluta*" (*ibid.*; p. 44).

⁴² "*super omnia sedet*" (*ibid.*, introduction to the chapter on the universal spirit; p. 53).

⁴³ "*non est pluribus natura communicabilis*" (*ibid.*, point XXI of chapter *De Patre seu mente seu plenitudine*; p. 42).

even within the corporeal frame of the world, his particular concept of the world soul as the universal substantial form, his idea of the divine character of the infinite universe (as we have adumbrated it in the preceding chapter) instigated JACOBI, Salomon MAIMON and SCHELLING well enough to compose either philosophical summaries or self-standing dialogues (on account) of BRUNO's metaphysics. In the German Enlightenment, JACOBI's abstract of *De la causa, principio et uno*, an attachment (*Beilage I*) to the second edition of *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza* (1789) was possibly the first sign of serious intellectual interest in BRUNO's teachings.

The *Excerpt from Giordano Bruno's On the Cause (Auszug aus Jordan Bruno von Nola, Von der Ursache, dem Princip und dem Einen)* is the result of a reading of the original Italian book, which, as JACOBI tells us in the foreword to the attachments, had become exceedingly rare ('*äusserst selten*') by that time. JACOBI's intention with his abstracts of BRUNO and, respectively, SPINOZA was "*to present the sum total of the philosophy of the One-and-All*" in his book.⁴⁴ He found it 'most useful and almost vital' ("*ungemein nützlich*" and '*beynah nothwendig*') that the public might come clearly to know the Brunonian metaphysical doctrine, which he deemed to be *not* obscure and classified as 'pantheism in the widest sense'.⁴⁵

His *Auszug* is, then, a highly exact paraphrase of *De la causa, principio et uno*, written in first person singular/plural in a manner as if BRUNO himself were speaking. It starts almost immediately with the discussion of the concept of the Brunonian *Weltseele* (i.e., it ignores the first, less philosophical dialogue of BRUNO's work), and defines it correctly as "*the general form of the universe*" ("*die allgemeine Form des Weltalls*"), the highest faculty of which is the '*Universal Intellect*', i.e., the '*allgemeiner Verstand*'. In general, the text reveals the same ingenious interpreter of metaphysical doctrines as the French summary of SPINOZA's philosophy in the main text, in JACOBI's letter to HEMSTERHUIS. This evaluation is underpinned by how JACOBI summarizes the logic by which the Many derives from the One, according to BRUNO: "*the First Principle generates the multitude of beings as it explicates its unity*".⁴⁶ This seems an understanding, or brief recapitulation, of the essence of Brunonian metaphysics.

Though JACOBI's presentation follows BRUNO's text very closely, it might be said that its philosophical accent is on the *Eins-und-Alles* thesis, on the analysis of the logical-ontological connection between God as One, and God as Many. The almost literal transcription of the grand introductory monologue of the fifth

⁴⁴"*gleichsam die Summa der Philosophie des Έν και Παν... darzulegen*" (GA, *Werke*, vol. I/1, p. 152. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, set-out characters by JACOBI).

⁴⁵"*Schwerlich kann man einen reineren und schöneren Umriß des Pantheismus im weitesten Verstande geben, als ihn Bruno zog*" (*Ibid.*; set-out characters by JACOBI). JACOBI tells us that he has also read another important metaphysical work of BRUNO's, the *De l'infinito, universo e mondi*. Through these readings, JACOBI was, in all likelihood, the most versed person of his time in the philosophy of Giordano BRUNO.

⁴⁶"*das erste Prinzip erzeugt, indem es seine Einheit entwickelt, die Mannichfaltigkeit der Wesen*" (*Ibid.*, p. 204. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, set-out characters by JACOBI).

dialogue about the divinized infinite universe anticipates, to a great extent, the German Romantic experience of the presence of the Infinite within the Finite and recalls, respectively, SCHLEIERMACHER's, Ph. O. RUNGE's⁴⁷ and HÖLDERLIN's religious attitudes toward nature as a 'phenomenon of God'. A note of personal philosophical satisfaction seems to filter through JACOBI's text as he refers to the Brunonian conviction that the discursive faculty of human reason cannot reach the concept of the Absolute, unlike faith, JACOBI's clue to the mystery of God.⁴⁸

Through his paraphrase, JACOBI carried out, even unintentionally, a very effective popularization of BRUNO's thought and, in particular, of the concept of the *Weltseele* insofar as *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza* became a widely read book. But since his *Auszug* is really no more than a paraphrase (it does not interpret or take position on BRUNO's metaphysics), we shall, at this point, cross over to the discussion of its influence. That JACOBI really contributed to the dissemination of Brunonian ideas is proved, among other things, by the fact that Salomon MAIMON (Sclomo ben Yoshua, 1753–1800), logician and sharp-witted critic of KANT, in his *Auszug aus Jordan Bruno von Nola* (1793),⁴⁹ reproduced, in lengthy citations, much of JACOBI's paraphrase of the book of the Nolan philosopher, whose doctrine MAIMON visibly knew only from JACOBI's work.

This text of MAIMON's, entitled exactly in the same way as JACOBI's *Auszug*, is essentially a running philosophical commentary on JACOBI's paraphrase of BRUNO, and is important to us because of its original treatment of the concept of the world soul as it is used by BRUNO, and of the way in which it should be used, according to MAIMON's conviction, in philosophy.⁵⁰ In this article, MAIMON's thesis concerning the notion of the world soul is that it is legitimately used when handled with philosophical awareness and caution, but illegitimately used as soon as it is applied in an enthusiastic discourse, anthropomorphically-poetically:

⁴⁷Cf. RUNGE's emotional-religious perception of nature in his letter to his brother Daniel, of 9 March 1802 (RUNGE *frater* ed., p. 9; cited under Section 2 of Chapter 9, in footnote). On RUNGE and his intellectual standing in the German Romantic movement, see HOFFMEISTER, p. 185.

⁴⁸Cf. "Nicht bis zu dem Begriffe des allerhöchsten Wesens, dessen Erkenntniß ausser dem Bezirke des menschlichen Verstandes liegt, können wir uns auf diese Weise (by a conceptual analysis) hinaufschwingen... Es gehört dazu ein übernatürliches Licht, welches nie bey der Meinung, jedes Ding sey Körper..., angetroffen wird" (*Ibid.*, pp. 198–199; set-out characters by JACOBI).

⁴⁹Published in the *Magazin für Erfahrungsseelenkunde als ein Lesebuch für Gelehrte und Ungelehrte*, 1793, № 2, pp. 49–84; in ed. VERRA, vol. 4, pp. 617–652.

⁵⁰MAIMON discusses the problem of the *Weltseele* also in his 1790 article *Ueber die Weltseele (Entelechia universi)*, in *Ueber das Vorhersehungsvermögen* (1791), and in *Ueber die Schwärmerei* (1793; cf. EHREN-SPERGER, p. 10). On MAIMON's theory of the world soul, see Fl. EHRENSPERGER's dissertation (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, München, 2006): *Weltseele und unendlicher Verstand. Das Problem der Individualität und Subjektivität in der Philosophie Salomon Maimons*, especially Chapters 1.2, 2.2 and 5.1.

*The concept of a soul of the world as a supra-sensible being which is the highest efficient, formal and final cause of all natural things can be considered in several different aspects as true or, respectively, false.*⁵¹

God, argues MAIMON in what follows, just may be considered, in an *a posteriori* theology, as a fourfold (formal, final, efficient and even – in a specific restricted sense – material) cause.⁵² In this perspective, it is not unjustified to apply the term ‘world soul’ to the aspect of God as a formal cause, within the concept of the absolute First Cause. This, however, may happen only insofar as we take into account that our concept of God results from a conclusion drawn from experience-based propositions, and insofar as we do not ascribe to God attributes deriving from our power of imagination (like, e.g., that He is, literally, a ‘soul’). The concept of God is a problematic but not impossible one, and care must be taken that, when applying the term ‘world soul’ to God as a formal cause, He is *not* conceived on the analogy of the human soul, as *properly* animating the cosmic body of the material universe.⁵³ Hence, reason operates legitimately, within its natural bounds, so far as it traces back the existence of the world as an organic whole to a single transcendent entity. But to say, with BRUNO, that the universe itself literally *embodies* its own divine formal cause as a *soul* (the first perfection of a potentially alive, physical body), is to enthuse, to speak analogically-metaphorically, and to draw a conclusion that is not warranted by reason but offered by poetic imagination. In this, the ‘higher’ enthusiast, ‘*der höhere Schwärmer*’ (i.e., the genius) abounds. As MAIMON put it on account of BRUNO’s exposition about the material principle of the universe:

Here we can see how the productive (i.e., poetic) imagination urges all other cognitive powers to perform more than they are able to. The imagination transforms the unity of nature which the understanding comes to know, into the highest unity of nature, and out of this, it forms a highest, ideal unity of principles. ...

The uncouth enthusiast gives evidence of a lack of the cognitive powers... The cold philosopher of the school gives token of... a lack of genius. But the higher enthusiast is a genius. In the scholarly learning of the philosopher, he discovers the traces of a higher insight. These are what he, even if in an imperfect manner, strives to represent to himself. But since these traces lie buried in the cognitive power deeper than any definite knowledge,

⁵¹“Die Vorstellung von einer Weltseele als ein intelligibeles Wesen das die höchste wirkende Formelle und Endursache aller Objekte der Natur ist, kann in verschiedener Rücksicht als wahr und als falsch erklärt werden” (VERRA ed., vol. 4, p. 626. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI).

⁵²Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 626–627; on God as a ‘material’ cause, p. 629. In this last passage, MAIMON explains with an analogy that God may be conceived to bring forth the matter of the universe in a like manner as our power of representation produces imaginary space, the ‘matter’ of geometric figures, when such figures are represented in the mind. In metaphysical terms, the analogy is not unreasonable, if it is true that God as Creator relates to the material substance of the world as our faculty of representation relates to what may be called ‘material’ in imaginary objects.

⁵³Cf. MAIMON’s opinion of the *Schwärmer*: “Jene begnügen sich nicht blos damit die Welt d. h. alle Objekte der Natur als ein verbundenes Ganzes auf eine Ursache überhaupt zu beziehen, sondern sie suchen diese Ursache nach Analogie der menschlichen Seele, als Objekt zu bestimmen” (*Ibid.*, p. 628).

*it is no wonder that he sometimes sacrifices definite knowledge in order to roam about, led by the genius, in untrod paths.*⁵⁴

The *philosophical* interpretation of the *Weltseele*-concept comes to the fore in a short passage of the same article, where MAIMON positively inserts it into a tripartite psychological scheme. In this general hierarchical scheme of the 'representative' powers (*Vorstellungsvermögen*, not to be identified with the power of imagination, *Einbildungskraft*) of intelligent beings, the *Weltseele* occupies a middle position in between the infinite divine intellect (*unendlicher Verstand* in MAIMON'S other texts), 'which is all', and the finite human understanding, in which several different representations are produced in succession:

*For the same reason, it cannot be asserted that the infinite power of representation fashions (produces) all its representations because they necessarily belong to its essence. It is more proper to say that the infinite power of representation is all its representations. The human power of representation, limited as it is, is not all what it can be simultaneously, but whatever it can be is produced in it one by one. Hence, the soul of the world, in so far as it is a power of representation which makes real all possible representations, even if not simultaneously but in succession, is the real efficient cause.*⁵⁵

With this interpretation of the world soul as the universal efficient cause, MAIMON seems to transform the Brunonian idea of the *intelletto universale* as the highest faculty of the *anima del mondo*. The world soul is still the universal efficient cause ("wirkende Ursache"), but apparently *not* the organic substantial form of the entire natural universe. On this philosophically conceived theory, the world soul seems the aspect of God that, as an external cause, produces every possible internal form in the phenomenal world, one after the other in the course of time.⁵⁶

⁵⁴"Hier siehet man, wie die produktive (dichterische) Einbildungskraft, alle andere Erkenntnißkräfte zur Wirksamkeit über die Grenzen ihres Vermögens anspornt. Die Natureinheit die der Verstand erkennt, schafft sie zur höchsten Natureinheit, die sie nachher in der höchsten Einheit der Prinzipien idealisirt. ... Der grobe Schwärmer verräth einen Mangel des Erkenntnisvermögens... Der kalte, schulgerechte Philosoph verräth... ein(en) Mangel an Genie. Der Schwärmer von der höheren Art ist ein Genie. Er findet in der schulgerechten Erkenntniß des Philosophen Spuren einer höheren Erkenntniß. Diese bestrebt er sich, ob zwar auf eine unvollkommene Art, darzustellen. Da nun diese Spuren viel tiefer im Erkenntnißvermögen liegen als jede bestimmte Erkenntniß, so ist es kein Wunder, wenn er zuweilen diese jenen aufopfert, und nach Leitung des Genies auf unbekannt Wege herumwandelt" (*Ibid.*, pp. 651–652. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, underlining added).

⁵⁵"Auf eben der Art kann von dem unendlichen Vorstellungsvermögen nicht gesagt werden, es **wirkt** (bringt hervor) alles d. h. seine Vorstellungen, weil diese seinem Wesen nothwendig sind; sondern es **ist** alles. – Das menschliche eingeschränkte Vorstellungsvermögen ist nicht alles was es seyn kann auf einmal, sondern dieses wird in ihm nach und nach **hervorgebracht**. Die Weltseele als ein Vorstellungsvermögen das zwar alle mögliche Vorstellungen wirklich macht, } {a}ber nicht auf einmal, sondern in einer Zeitfolge ist also die wahre wirkende Ursache" (*Ibid.*, pp. 632–633. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, bold characters by MAIMON).

⁵⁶Cf. EHRENSPERGER'S philosophical summary of MAIMON'S here expounded doctrine: "In dieser Hinsicht beschreibt der unendliche Verstand den göttlichen Intellekt an und für sich, während in der Weltseele sein Verhältnis auf die Welt betrachtet wird. ... Der unendliche Verstand ist in dieser Perspektive das Ziel des Weges 'von unten herauf'. Die Weltseele hingegen untersucht das Verhältnis Gottes auf die Welt..." (p. 138).

MAIMON, hence, treated the *anima mundi*-theory, at least in a certain respect, positively and with philosophical creativity, whereby he is among the chronologically first modern German philosophers, preceded perhaps only by BAADER, who argumentatively reintegrated the concept of the *Weltseele* in the terminology of the philosophical sciences.⁵⁷

But BRUNO's seminal influence is conspicuous also in the thought of the young SCHELLING (1775–1854). In the winter of 1801–1802, in Jena, one year and a half after the tragic death of CAROLINE SCHLEGEL's daughter,⁵⁸ SCHELLING's interest in BRUNO was raised by JACOBI's presentation of *De la causa, principio et uno* in the second edition of *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza*. His book *Bruno oder über das göttliche und natürliche Prinzip der Dinge – Ein Gespräch* (Berlin, 1802) was thus inspired by the same source as MAIMON's *Auszug aus Jordan Bruno von Nola*, but the similarities end here. SCHELLING's work is a treatise, in dialogue form, of fundamental metaphysics, which explores more or less systematically the full extent of his philosophy of absolute identity, positing a necessary bond of the Finite with the Infinite, of the Natural with the Divine in the Absolute.

As is known, SCHELLING's position is represented in the dialogue by the interlocutor called BRUNO. Brunonian philosophy itself is also adumbrated toward the end of the dialogue, and its imprint is clearly recognizable in the metaphysical position occupied by SCHELLING. In his account of BRUNO's philosophy, based entirely on JACOBI's paraphrase,⁵⁹ SCHELLING briefly mentions also the concept of “*die Seele der Welt*”, and uses it, correctly, as an equivalent of the “*Form aller Formen*”, BRUNO's *forma universale* or world soul:

But in order that that form of all forms, which, in the wake of others, we could call the life and the soul of the world, should not be thought of as a soul opposed to matter, i.e., to its body, it must be pointed out that matter is not body but the ground of existence for both the body and the soul. ... The form of all forms, in an absolute sense, is not opposed to matter but the two form one substance...⁶⁰

⁵⁷ On MAIMON's idea of the *Weltseele* in its early modern philosophical context (with especial reference to the revival of the Aristotelian theory of the heat of the heavens), see J. ZACHHUBER's article “*Weltseele und Himmelswärme. Zur Diskussion um den Ursprung des Lebens in der Neuzeit*.”

⁵⁸ For a lively presentation and understanding psychological analysis of SCHELLING's external circumstances of life, as well as of his emotional condition and moral disposition in this period, see JASPERS's Schelling-monography, pp. 15–41.

⁵⁹ SCHELLING refers to, and also extensively cites from, JACOBI's *Auszug aus Jordan Bruno* at the end of his text, where, beginning with BRUNO's metaphysics, the four major directions of philosophy are presented.

⁶⁰ “*Damit aber nicht jene Form aller Formen, welche wir zwar allerdings mit andern das Leben und die Seele der Welt nennen könnten, von jemand als Seele, die der Materie als dem Leib entgegengesetzt ist, gedacht werde, so muß wohl bemerkt werden, daß die Materie nicht der Leib ist, sondern das, woran der Leib und die Seele existiren. ... Jene Form aber der Formen, absolut betrachtet, ist nicht der Materie entgegengesetzt, sondern eins mit ihr...*” (*Bruno*, part C; SCHELLING *filiius* ed., vol. I/4, p. 312. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI).

In his interpretation of BRUNO, SCHELLING first posits prime matter and the necessary primal form (the above-mentioned Form of Forms), which is intrinsically and infinitely productive in primal matter. The *materia prima* yields to the informing power of the primary form, and puts on all possible forms. In the infinite universe, no potency is dormant but the totality of what is possible is actualized. The universal form will be hereby individualized, and multiplied in the infinite number of objects of the phenomenal universe. In this process, however, the *essence* (*Wesen*) of each generated finite thing still retains the constitutive imprint of the Absolute and remains infinite. In the ontological structure of the phenomenal things, the substantial *form* is different from the *essence*, while in the Absolute, essence and form eternally coincide in perfect simplicity, unity and unicity. The phenomenal universe is but the pluralizing unfolding of the Absolute, so the Form of Forms, the soul of the world, will ultimately be the instrument of the supra-phenomenal deity. It is a tool subservient to the One in its transition to multiplicity.⁶¹

At this point, it is perceivable how SCHELLING recognizes his own theory of the Absolute in BRUNO's idea of the infinite universe. This conception of the relationship between the Finite and Infinite – the unification of the two in a scheme of absolute connection (in which the two ontological poles are linked together by virtue of the infinite essence, equally present in the nature of the finite things) – is the philosophical guarantee of the *unity* of the entire universe. By this connection, the entire 'Creation' shares in God's life, 'breathes' according to the rhythm of the secret nature of God, and is imperishable because of its own infinite (divine) essence. SCHELLING's style puts on the features of a Platonic rapture as he draws the conclusion, from his summary of BRUNO's metaphysics, about the live organic unity of the finite-infinite world:

...there is only one world, one plant, of which every existing thing is a particular leaf, flower or fruit. Everything is different from all the rest not in respect of essence but in respect of grade. There is only one universe, with respect to which everything is splendid, truly divine and beautiful. The universe itself is ungenerated, single and unwithering.

...There lives an unchanging, eternally self-identical Being. Every operation and motion is... but a continuation of that absolute Being, gushing forth from its innermost tranquillity.⁶²

⁶¹ Cf. "Auf diese Weise geht das Absolute, da es für sich selbst eine absolute Einheit, schlechthin einfach, ohne alle Vielheit ist, in der Erscheinung zwar über in eine absolute Einheit der Vielheit, in eine beschlossene Totalität, was wir Universum nennen. So ist die Allheit Einheit, die Einheit Allheit, beide nicht verschieden, sondern dasselbe" (*Ibid.*). Though here SCHELLING speaks about the absolute identity of the divine unity with the totality of the extended universe, he maintains the incognoscibility of the divine essence in a preceding paragraph, where he, still in the name of BRUNO, argues that "der Punkt aber, wo Materie und Form völlig eins, Seele und Leib aber in dieser Form selbst ununterscheidbar sind, liegt über aller Erscheinung" (*Ibid.*, p. 313).

⁶² "...es ist nur Eine Welt, Eine Pflanze, von der alles, was ist, nur Blätter, Blüten und Früchte, jedes verschieden, nicht dem Wesen, sondern der Stufe nach, Ein Universum, in Ansehung desselben aber alles herrlich, wahrhaft göttlich und schön, es selbst aber unerzeugt an sich, gleich ewig mit der Einheit selbst, eingeboren, unverwelklich. ...Es lebt ein unveränderliches, sich immer gleiches Seyn. Alle Thätigkeit und Bewegung ist... nur Fortsetzung jenes absoluten Seyns, unmittelbar hervorquillend aus seiner tiefsten Ruhe" (*Ibid.*, p. 314. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI).

'Being' itself *ipso facto* carries the attribute of life, even in the depths of the divine nature. There is no existence that is, as such, not alive. The divine essence, then, though it is, considered in itself, perfectly impassible, brings forth immediately (*unmittelbar*) the finite forms of the world of experience, with the immanent universal form: the world soul intrinsically informing prime matter. The emanation of the world from the Absolute is immediate insofar as the soul of the world is *not* a separate substance or reality (*hypostasis*), which, as a third principle between God and matter, would intrude into matter *ab extra*. On the contrary, it informs and animates primary matter *ab intra*; it *is* one with matter.

SHELLING's own metaphysical position in *Bruno* is intimately related to his interpretation of BRUNO's system in general. This seems to hold, to some extent, for *his own* idea of the world soul as well, though in *Bruno* (except for the parts treating of BRUNO's philosophy), this idea certainly does not play a normative philosophical role. It appears that in this text, there is only one passage in which SCHELLING makes an explicit philosophical proposition concerning the "*Seele der Welt*" in his own name. This particular passage is, however, highly interesting, as the author discusses the nature of the Absolute here, and brings it into philosophical connection with the concept of the world soul:⁶³

In everything, however, operation and being relate to each other in the same manner as soul to body. Hence, the absolute cognition, although it is eternally with God and is God Himself, can not be thought of as pure operation. Because soul and body, i.e., operation and existence are from Him...; and just as the infinite body expresses the essence of the Absolute through the medium of existence, so in the same manner is the essence of the Absolute expressed through the medium of thought, i.e., operation, as infinite cognition, the infinite soul of the world...⁶⁴

This statement is part of a longer section concerning the absolute identity of the Finite with the Infinite in Eternity, *Ewigkeit*. *Das Ewige*, the One, the Absolute,

⁶³H. KNITTERMEYER, in the chapter on SCHELLING's *Bruno* (KNITTERMEYER, pp. 304–311) does not reflect on this passage. X. TILLIETTE in his grand Schelling-monography does, but he does not seem to consider strictly enough the philosophical context of the term in the Schellingian text, as he writes that "*Nous dirions provisoirement que la contemplation spéculative est une attitude, un sens de la sympathie universelle et de la solidarité de tout avec tout. Ce que Schelling traduit par le «corps infini» et l'«âme» du monde*" (TILLIETTE, vol. I, p. 352). In fact, SCHELLING's statement appears to be a Spinozistic formulation of the principles of the philosophy of absolute identity, and there seems to be no reference in it to the Plotinian-Neoplatonic 'sympathy of all', which TILLIETTE, apparently, has in mind.

⁶⁴"*Sonst aber verhalten sich Thätigkeit und Seyn in allen Dingen wie Seele und Leib; daher auch das absolute Erkennen, obgleich es ewig bei Gott und Gott selbst ist, doch nicht wie Thätigkeit gedacht werden kann. Denn von ihm sind Seele und Leib, Thätigkeit also und Seyn...; und wie das Wesen des Absolutum im Seyn reflektirt der unendliche Leib, so ist dasselbe im Denken oder in der Thätigkeit reflektirt, als unendliches Erkennen, die unendliche Seele der Welt...*" (Part of interlocutor Bruno's grand monologue in 7/c; SCHELLING *filius* ed., vol. I/4, p. 305. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, highlighting added). Note that SCHELLING uses the term '*Gott*' now with reference to the Absolute, now with reference to the ontologically lower-ranking Infinite, which is also the Ideal and the soul of the world.

are terms denoting the all-embracing totality of divine reality understood as the *identitas omnium oppositorum*, as the highest equalization and unity which resolves all opposition between being and cognition, Ideal and Real, Finite and Infinite.⁶⁵ The One is thus the resolution of opposition in an indifference (*Indifferenz*), which is essentially the necessary bond and unification of Finite and Infinite, *Natur und Gott*, in a higher unit that is *beyond* both of them on the scale of being, and that is called by SCHELLING as 'the King and Father of all Things'. The One occupies a region of existence inaccessible to human *intellectual* effort, but is perceived through a higher metaphysical *sensibility*.⁶⁶ The perfection of the essence of the Eternal One is fully 'reflected' ("*reflektirt*") in both the Finite (as infinite *existence*, *Seyn*) and the Infinite (as infinite activity, *Thätigkeit*, i.e., *cognition* or thought, *Erkennen*). The absolute cognition of the 'Father of all Things' is identical with its essence (*Wesen*) in the supra-phenomenal indifference. The infinite *cognition* as manifested at a lower ontological level (below the region of absolute identity) appears as the infinite Soul of the World, while infinite *existence* is seen as the infinite body (*Leib*) of the world. The infinite universe constituted by them is a cosmic living being, the organic unity of which is a representation of the absolute unity of the Absolute. By the position of this 'sacred unity' of the Finite with the Infinite, the concept of the extramundane God becomes unintelligible, since God pervades the world and the world pervades God. In this condition of *interpenetration*, God is inseparable or even indistinguishable from the world; and the intellectual contemplation or *visio beatifica* of the unity of this divinely animated universe is the highest degree of human beatitude.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Cf. TILLIETTE'S interpretive remark concerning these pairs of metaphysical opposites: "*La thématique des paires de contraires forme l'armature de la philosophie de l'Identité. ... Ainsi les trois couples principaux, autour desquels les autres s'ordonnent, sont: la subjectivité et l'objectivité, l'idéal et le réel, l'infini et le fini. ... Approximativement on peut dire que le couple sujet-objet concerne la forme (la connaissance) de l'Absolu, le couple idéal-réel l'essence de l'Absolu ou sa nature identique, le couple infini-fini la totalité de l'Absolu ou l'Absolu comme univers*" (TILLIETTE, vol. I, p. 339).

⁶⁶ Cf. the famed passage "*Denn jener König und Vater aller Dinge lebt in ewiger Seligkeit außer allem Widerstreit, sicher und unerreichbar in seiner Einheit wie in einer unzugänglichen Burg. Das Innere aber einer solchen Natur, welche an sich weder Denken noch Seyn, aber die Einheit davon ist, einigermäßen zu fühlen, vermöchte nur der, welcher mehr oder weniger an ihr Theil nähme. Dieses innere Geheimniß jedoch ihres Wesens, nichts in ihr selbst weder von einem Denken noch einem Seyn zu enthalten, aber die Einheit davon zu seyn, die über beiden ist, ohne von beiden getrübt zu seyn, offenbart sich an der Natur der endlichen Dinge; denn im Reflex tritt die Form auseinander in Ideelles und Reelles...*" (SCHELLING *filius* ed., vol. I/4, p. 302).

⁶⁷ "*Die höchste Macht also oder der wahre Gott ist der, außer welchem nicht die Natur ist, so wie die wahre Natur die, außer der nicht Gott ist. Jene heilige Einheit nun, worin Gott ungetrennt mit der Natur ist, und die im Leben zwar als Schicksal erprobt wird, in unmittelbarer, übersinnlicher Anschauung zu erkennen, ist die Weihe zur höchsten Seligkeit, die allein in der Betrachtung des Allervollkommensten gefunden wird*" (SCHELLING *filius* ed., vol. I/4, p. 307).

Hereby is the expulsion from philosophy of the concept of God as *ens extramundanum* executed by virtue of a particular version of the *Weltseele*-theory.⁶⁸ SCHELLING, as the chief German Romantic metaphysician in the years following the turn of the century, states, implicitly criticizing LEIBNIZ, that it is a philosophical mistake to conceive of the Absolute as the infinite First Cause, which is absolutely opposed to its finite effect, the world. The concept of the Absolute, argues SCHELLING, logically abolishes, in truth, that of opposition.⁶⁹

In the Schellingian concept of the Absolute, as we have seen, the term 'Father' may stand for the absolute unity of the Finite with the Infinite. We may add that SCHELLING applies the term 'Spirit' (with evident reference to the Holy Spirit) to the concept of the Infinite (the *Seele der Welt*), and that he qualifies the Finite as 'a suffering God' (with evident reference to the Christ). Thus, he introduces the trinitological scheme into the internal logical-ontological constitution of the Absolute, although in a different manner from how BRUNO carried this out in the *Lampas triginta statuarum* (see Section 1). In SCHELLING's Absolute, the Christ is *not* the *intellecto universale*, but He immanently penetrates the Finite while He is still asserted to be essentially and "an sich" infinite.⁷⁰

SCHELLING's *Bruno* is thus an original exposition of the German Romantic postulation that the infinite God is really present within the world of finite beings by virtue of a substantial interpenetration; that the world is an indissoluble unit, with an aspect of the Absolute (the *Weltseele*-Holy Spirit) as the principle and

⁶⁸ Poignantly enough, H. KNITTERMEYER qualifies SCHELLING's philosophy of absolute identity in *Bruno* as "Fiktion" (KNITTERMEYER, p. 309). His sad overall evaluation of the concept of the Absolute is that "der Philosoph taucht in die Nacht ein, in der die Unterschiede und Widersprüche der Tageswelt nichtig scheinen" (*Ibid.*, p. 311). X. TILLIETTE, in contrast, thinks that SCHELLING reached a philosophical and literary apogee in this dialogue (cf. TILLIETTE, vol. I., pp. 335-336), and qualifies his speculative metaphysics in *Bruno* as "réal-idéalisme" (*ibid.*, p. 354).

⁶⁹ Cf. interlocutor Anselmo's discourse in part C: "Nachdem sie (the several different philosophies) nun bloß die dem Verstande dienbare Vernunft gerichtet, und damit von der Vernunft selbst bewiesen zu haben glauben, daß sie nur in unvermeidliche Fehlschlüsse und eitle Widersprüche verwickelte, so sind sie berechtigt, aus ihrer Scheu vor der Vernunft die Philosophie selbst zu machen. Wollen sie aber diese Schranken überschreiten, so fürchten sie sich doch vor nichts so sehr als dem Absoluten, so wie vor der kategorischen und apodiktischen Erkenntniß. Sie können keinen Schritt thun, ohne vom Endlichen auszugehen und von diesem aus fortzuschließen, wie es kommt, ob sie zu etwas gelangen mögen, das schlechthin und durch sich selbst wäre. Was sie aber als Absolutes setzen, setzen sie nothwendig und immer mit einem Gegensatz, damit es nicht zum Absoluten werde. Zwischen jenem aber und dem Entgegengesetzten gibt es wiederum kein anderes als das Verhältnis der Ursache und der Wirkung, und unter allen Formen wiederholt sich doch Ein Beginnen, Ein Streben, nicht die Einheit dessen zuzugeben, was sie im Verstande getrennt haben, und die angeborene und unüberwindliche Entzweiung ihrer Natur zur Philosophie selbst zu machen" (*Ibid.*, pp. 308-309).

⁷⁰ "Wir werden in dem Wesen jenes Einen, welches von allen Entgegengesetzten weder das eine noch das andere ist, den ewigen und unsichtbaren Vater aller Dinge erkennen, der, indem er selbst nie aus seiner Ewigkeit austritt, Unendliches und Endliches begreift in einem und demselben Akt göttlichen Erkennens: und das Unendliche zwar ist der Geist, welcher die Einheit aller Dinge ist, das Endliche aber an sich zwar gleich dem Unendlichen, durch seinen eignen Willen aber ein leidender und den Bedingungen der Zeit unterworfenener Gott" Part B 4; *ibid.*, p. 252.

guarantee of that unity; and that the entire universe is intrinsically alive. With this brief analysis of the dialogue *Bruno*, we have reached the period of the German history of philosophy and ideas when thinkers of the first intellectual rank began positively to assert (also in experimental natural scientific theories) that the material universe as a whole is moved and animated by an all-pervading material but imperceptible soul of the world. We discuss two such theories, that of Fr. X. BAADE in *Vom Wärmestoffe* and that of SCHELLING in *Von der Weltseele* and *Die Weltalter* in the following, last part of our work. First, however, a philosophical summary of Part Three and an introduction to Part Four seems necessary.

3 A Philosophical Recapitulation of Part Three. An Introduction to Part Four: The Reception of the World Soul Theory in Early German Romanticism

Having come to the end of the present, extensive part on philosophical Cabbala, Spinozism and mysticism, it is time to draw up a philosophical balance-sheet in order to appraise the intellectual contribution these broad currents of thought made to the early German Romantic stock of ideas concerning the soul of the world and the relation between the Finite and the Infinite. At the beginning of this part, our investigation started from the Christian Cabbalistic speculations of BÖHME and his spiritual heir, ÖTINGER. AS E. BENZ has, with erudition and authority, already assessed the general philosophical impact of German Christian Cabbala as formulated mainly by these two thinkers on the Romantics,⁷¹ we shall only point out – in the perspective of our particular interest in the *Weltseele* as a concept situated between the antagonistic metaphysical poles of the Finite and the Infinite – that the concept of the world soul as used by BÖHME and ÖTINGER actually transmitted to the early German Romantics part of the medieval and renaissance Hermetic-alchemistic tradition, in which an *anima* or *spiritus mundi* often emerged as a crucial spiritual agent. The presence of such an esoteric strand in the thought of the Romantics, however, did not destroy but, rather, merged with the impact of the experimental, natural scientific mode of thought applied in physico-theology. But the influence of the Christian Cabbala of BÖHME and ÖTINGER makes itself felt also on a more general metaphysical level insofar as in a Cabbalistic frame of thought, the whole physical universe emanates from the transcendent depth of the ineffable Unbounded One, the *En-soph*, which continuously exerts a spiritual-corporeal influx on the phenomenal world. Phenomenal existence is thus a representation and unfolding of the infinite ideal ‘content’ of God in philosophical Cabbala, and this doctrine is sympathetic with the early German Romantic metaphysical thesis concerning the necessary relation of the Finite with the Infinite, as it was expounded by, e.g., SCHELLING.

⁷¹ Cf. his *Les sources mystiques de la philosophie romantique allemande*, Chapter I, point 2, and Chapter IV (see bibliography under BENZ, 1987).

Second, the influence of *Spinozism* as a metaphysical system on the early German Romantics is difficult to overestimate, but it is important to note that, to the best of our knowledge, the Romantics never interpreted Spinozism as a version of the *Weltseele*-theory. The only exception may be the paragraph cited above, in Section 2, towards the end, from SCHELLING's *Bruno*, where the author seems to characterize the Spinozistic infinite divine attribute of *cogitatio* as "*die unendliche Seele der Welt*". The essential Spinozan metaphysical thesis for the early German Romantics, however, is that of the unicity of substance. By virtue of this thesis, the entire universe is infinite and finite modifications of the infinite attributes of God, who is no extramundane being but the immanent cause of existence. Philosophically, this renders the presence of God a degree more immediate; but the presence of God in the substance of the world may, in this way, be interpreted (as indeed it was by HERDER) as the presence of the inherent infinite *power of nature* in the individual things.

Third, the confidential Cabbalistic statements of the aged LESSING, as communicated with the learned public by JACOBI, essentially canalized a Neoplatonic emanationist cosmogony, in the terminology of the Jewish mystical tradition, towards the younger generation. The role of the Jewish Cabbala in this context was to propagate esoterically a concept of God as the transcendent One who manifests Himself, by a super-abundance and effusion of essence, through an act of *expansion*, in the Many of the phenomenal world. In this way, the world of the finite things was represented as deriving from, and as a manifestation of, the infinite divine essence.

Fourth, in the case of HERDER, the turn toward (a specific interpretation of) Spinozism took place in proportion with his turn away from KANT's transcendental theology and moral theology of the postulates of pure practical reason. HERDER's and his spiritual companion GOETHE's dissatisfaction with Kantianism was the expression of the demand that God should be conceived in speculative respect not as an 'empty' regulative idea of pure theoretical reason, but as *being, power and life* operating from within the essence of the finite individual things. In this way, according to HERDER, God might metaphorically be denominated as the soul of the world. In HERDER's (historically questionable) interpretation of Spinozism, then, the concept of God still conserved the attribute of transcendence, even though God was conceived to operate intrinsically (immanently). This metaphysically difficult thesis had a liberating effect on the approach to SPINOZA of the post-*Sturm-und-Drang* generation, for which the concepts of life, divine presence and immanence were of programmatic philosophical value.

Fifth, there is no doubt that beyond the Cabbala, SPINOZA and HERDER, BRUNO, himself a Cabbalist (see his *Cabala del cavallo pegaseo*, 1585), exerted an important metaphysical influence on the early German Romantics by virtue of his doctrine, expounded in the fifth dialogue of *De la causa*, that the Infinite is identical with the Finite and the Finite with the Infinite. But BRUNO, a major exponent of the *anima mundi*-theory, gave an impetus, as we have seen in Section 2, to the philosophical development of that theory as well. Since he applied the world soul

theory also in the frame of a revelational trinitological scheme, we should point out (on account of his ideas of the *anima del mondo* as the Holy Spirit and of the *intelletto universale* as the Son) that trinitological concepts played an axiological role also in the more mature thought of BAADER (cf. *Über den Blitz...*, towards the end) and SCHELLING (cf., e.g., *Bruno* and *Die Weltalter*, *passim*).

As regards the *Weltseele* as a concept in the context of the relationship of the Finite with the Infinite, it may be said that the early German Romantics discovered and often reinterpreted authoritative or unorthodox metaphysical sources in different intellectual traditions that inspired them to think the concept of the World Soul as an interface enabling Nature to be grounded in God.

As concerns chronology, it seems that in Germany,⁷² a more vivid discussion of the world soul theory started around 1770 with the semi-anonymous publication entitled, “*Gedanken über die Welt-Seele des Plato*” in the *Philologische Bibliothek*, 1770, vol. 1, pp. 1–14 (authored by “M.”).⁷³ Next is LESSING’s difficult statement in the JACOBI-conversations (July 1780; see Sections 11 and 12 of Chapter 7). In the second half of

⁷²In France, a translation and very detailed philosophical commentary of the *Timaios Lokros*, a Hellenistic cosmogonical text (in which §§ 16–18 of Chapter One expound a simplified Platonic doctrine of the soul of the world) was published, together with the Greek original, in as early as 1763 by the Marquis D’ARGENS, then president of the philological class of the Royal Academy of Berlin (*Timée de Locres en grec et en françois...*, 405 pages, see bibliography under D’ARGENS). D’ARGENS, like most of his contemporaries, believed that the *Timaios Lokros* really derived from PLATO’s time. – Abbot BATTEUX’s edition, translation and detailed commentary of the same text had already been ready at that time, but was published only 5 years later, in 1768, under the title “*Timée de Locres, De l’Ame du Monde*” (see bibliography under BATTEUX). Abbot BATTEUX, while keen on popularizing this ancient source on the world soul, himself seems to advocate a less strong version of the theory as he says that “*Timée ajoute que le Monde est animé & intelligent; sans doute parce qu’il se meut vers des fins, par des moyens ordonnés. Mais pour cela, le Monde a-t-il besoin d’être un animal, & d’avoir une ame informante comme l’homme? Ne seroit-ce pas assez qu’il eût une ame assistante, comme un vaisseau, qui est mû par les vents, & conduit par un pilote?*” (BATTEUX, section “*Remarques sur Timée de Locres*”, pp. 86–87; see also pp. 90–93) – The physicist J.-C. de la MÉTHERIE, in his anonymous *Principes de la philosophie naturelle* (Geneva 1787, vol. II, p. 192), identified the ‘universal soul of the world,’ as a principle of universal movement, with fire or light: “*Le feu ou la lumiere est donc le grand agent qui meut tous les corps; sans lui, tous se combinant, bientôt le mouvement cesserait dans l’univers. Les anciens sages de l’Orient avoient bien aperçus cette vérité, lorsqu’ils avoient dit que le feu étoit l’ame universelle du monde*” (Cited by Fr. MOISO: “*Magnetismus, Elektrizität, Galvanismus*” in AA Reihe I, *Ergänzungsband zu Band 5 bis 9*, p. 289).

⁷³According to Dr. EHRENSPERGER’s personal communication, the author might be either Leonhard MEISTER or Christoph MEINERS. This short article gives evidence of an interest in the systematic philosophical interpretation of PLATO’s concept of the soul of the world in the *Timaios*, and proposes PLUTARCH’S *De animae generatione secundum Platonem* as a hermeneutical guide. The author qualifies the relevant Platonic doctrine as very obscure: “*Die Welt-Seele des Plato ist eines von den dunkelsten Geheimnissen in seiner ganzen Philosophie. ... Sie (PLATO’s later admirers) dachten nicht einmahl daran oder wolten es wenigstens nicht sagen, daß Plato vielleicht selbst nicht gewußt hat, was er mit seiner Welt-Seele anfangen sollte. ... Will man also den Plato nicht beschuldigen, daß er sich selbst nicht verstanden habe: so thut man am besten, wenn man die Auslegung des Plutarchs beybehält...*” (pp. 1–2 and 14).

the 1780s, the tone of the discussion concerning the world soul turns more positive with the publication of FRANZ VON BAADER's *Vom Wärmestoff* in 1786 (see below, Section 1 of Chapter 9). HERDER's allowance, in *Gott*, for the metaphorical application of the term *Weltseele* to God dates back to 1787 (see Section 14 of Chapter 7). Letters 7 and 8 of K. L. REINHOLD's *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie*, first published in 1786–1787, treat the world soul from a historical point of view, inquiring into the origins of the ancient Greek concepts of a thinking substance.⁷⁴ S. MAIMON's earliest, positive article on the world soul is from 1790 (“*Ueber die Weltseele. Entelechia universi*”),⁷⁵ but he wrote in the same agreeing tone about the world soul also in *Über das Vorhersehungsvermögen* (1791), in *Über die Schwärmerei* (1793), and in his *Auszug aus Jordan Bruno von Nola* (1793; see above, in Section 2).⁷⁶ MAIMON's publications were followed by SCHELLING's *Von der Weltseele* in 1798 (republished twice, in 1806 and 1809; see below, Section 2 of Chapter 9). NOVALIS, in the autumn of the same year, took notes (⟨*Studien zu Schellings “Von der Weltseele”*⟩)⁷⁷ of SCHELLING's study,

⁷⁴The *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie* first came out in the Weimar-based review *Der Teutsche Merkur* from August 1786 to September 1787 (cf. AMERIKS ed., p. X). In 1790, the *Letters*, significantly enlarged, were re-published in book form. In this version, epistles 7 and 8 of the original edition became 10 and 11, respectively. REINHOLD's explanation of Kantian philosophy, by virtue of its singular popularity, could unintentionally contribute to the discussion of the concept of the *Weltseele*.

⁷⁵*Berlinisches Journal für Aufklärung*, № 8, pp. 47–92. Apart from the introduction, this text is identical with MAIMON's article on the concept of the *Weltseele* in his *Philosophisches Wörterbuch* (Berlin 1791; *Gesammelte Werke* III). MAIMON here gives the following definition of the soul of the world: “*Die Weltseele ist eine der Materie überhaupt (dem Stoff aller reellen Objekte) beywohnende, und auf dieselbe wirkende Kraft, deren Wirkung nach der verschiedenen Modifizierung der Materie verschieden ist. Sie ist der Grund der besondern Art der Zusammensetzung in jedem, (auch Unorganisirten){,} ist die Organisation in jedem organisirten Körper, das Leben im Thier, der Verstand und die Vernunft im Menschen u. s. w., kurz sie giebt die Form, die wiederum die Materie zur Annehmung einer andern Form von einer höhern Ordnung geschickt macht. Und da die Materie unendliche Modifikationen annehmen kann, so kann diese Entelechie auch unendlich verschiedene Formen liefern, sie ist also der Grund aller möglichen Wirksamkeit*” (pp. 48–49). After a brief reflection on Kantianism, and a detailed discussion of the Leibnizian position on the *anima mundi* and the concept of God as an *ens extramundanum* (as well as several related natural philosophical and psychological points), MAIMON concludes his article with the following words, positively asserting the reality of the *Weltseele*: “*Ich halte daher die Idee einer allgemeinen Weltseele nicht nur der Natur und Vernunft an sich gemäß, sondern glaube auch, daß sie von großem Nutzen zur Erweiterung unsrer Naturerkenntnis seyn muß...*” (p. 92).

⁷⁶All three texts were published articles. “*Über das Vorhersehungsvermögen*”: *Deutsche Monatschrift* 1791/II, pp. 45–67 (VERRA ed., vol. III, pp. 276–298); “*Über die Schwärmerei*”: *Magazin für Erfahrungsseelenkunde* 1793/2, pp. 43–48 (VERRA ed., vol. IV, pp. 612–616); and “*Auszug aus Jordan Bruno von Nola*”: *ibid.*, 1793/2, pp. 49–84 (VERRA ed., vol. IV, pp. 617–652).

⁷⁷In KLUCKHOHN and SAMUEL, vol. III, tome II, pp. 102–114. Note that NOVALIS's manuscript is very technical (i.e., almost exclusively natural scientific), does not contain the word “*Weltseele*”, and that it consists, for the greater part, of citations from SCHELLING's study. The expression “*gemeinschaftliche Seele der Natur*” occurs at its very end, as a citation from SCHELLING.

and several times returned to the concept of the world soul in his *Vorarbeiten zu verschiedenen Fragmentsammlungen* (1798)⁷⁸ and in his *Allgemeines Brouillon* (1798–99).⁷⁹ GOETHE, also inspired by SCHELLING's work, wrote the poem *Weltseele* in the period 1798–1802.⁸⁰ Then, the term “*Seele der Welt*” refers to “divine air” in the literary context of HÖLDERLIN's *Hyperion* (1797–1799).⁸¹ Still in 1798, G. G. FÜLLEBORN

⁷⁸In section *Über Goethe*, under point 453, subtitle “*Weltpsychologie*”, NOVALIS attributes the organic condition of matter (“*Organism*”) to a world soul, and, parallelly, the teleological scheme of the world (“*Weltplan*”) to a universal reason. He then subordinates individual soul to the soul of the world: “*Den Organism wird man nicht ohne Voraussetzung einer Weltseele, wie den Weltplan nicht ohne Voraussetzung eines Weltvernunft-wesens, erklären können. ... Die individuelle Seele soll mit der Weltseele übereinstimmend werden. Herrschaft der Weltseele und Mitherrschaft der individuellen Seele*” (KLUCKHOHN and SAMUEL, eds., vol. II, p. 643).

⁷⁹*Das allgemeine Brouillon*, this impressive mark of NOVALIS's encyclopedic interests and culture, contains notes on the *Weltseele* in points 61, 407, 437 and 788. In these notes, NOVALIS reserves the moral universe for God, the physical universe for the world soul, and attributes natural change to the operation of the latter: “*Will ich nun Gott oder die Weltseele in den Himmel setzen? Besser wär es wohl, wenn ich den Himmel zum moralischen Universo erklärte – und die Weltseele im Universum ließe*” (*Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 250). “*...(Alle Wirkungen sind nichts, als Wirkungen Einer Kraft – der Weltseele – die sich nur unter verschiedenen Bedingungen, Verhältnissen und Umständen offenbart – die überall und nirgends ist. ...)*” (*Ibid.*, p. 423). The expression “*überall und nirgends ist*” is a literal borrowing from the foreword of the first edition of SCHELLING's *Von der Weltseele*.

⁸⁰The original title of the poem was *Weltschöpfung*. E. TRUNZ, the editor of the relevant volume of the HA, writes the following about the external circumstances of the composition of the poem: “*Es ist der Jenaer Kreis um Schelling und Steffens, mit dem er (GOETHE) verbunden war (in the time of the composition of the Weltseele-poem) in wechselseitiger Anregung in bezug auf Naturforschung; hier waltete ein Geist, der sich mit dem Universum identifizierte, es auszufüllen, ja es in seinen Teilen wieder hervorzubringen glaubte. Seit 1798 stand Goethe mit Schelling, der damals Professor in Jena geworden war, in persönlicher Verbindung; er las sämtliche naturphilosophische Schriften, die Schelling in diesen Jahren veröffentlichte, und ging sie z. T. in Gesprächen mit ihm durch*” (HA, vol. I, pp. 612–613). GOETHE addressed the *Weltseele* also in the poem *Eins und Alles* (1821). From this, we cite the significant closing lines: “*Das Ewige regt sich fort in allen, / Denn alles muß in Nichts zerfallen, / Wenn es im Sein beharren will*” (*Ibid.*, p. 369).

⁸¹Cf. *Hyperion's* letter to Diotima in book two: “*Der Mensch kans nicht verleugnen, daß er inst glücklich war, wie die Hirsche des Forsts und nach unzähligen Jahren klimmt noch in uns ein Sehnen nach den Tagen der Urwelt, wo jeder die Erde durchstriefte, wie ein Gott, eh, ich weiß nicht was? den Menschen zahm gemacht, und noch, statt Mauern und totem Holz, die Seele der Welt, die heilige Luft allgegenwärtig ihn umfieng*” (SW, vol. III, p. 112). Several other poetic statements elaborate on the divine attributes of air in other parts of the book. – B. H. BROCKES's poetic conception of air as the *Weltgeist* may perhaps be regarded as a forerunner to HÖLDERLIN's *Weltseele*-idea. BROCKES, this early German Enlightenment poet, wrote a long philosophical poem about *Die Luft* (1727), stanza 54 of which reads as follows: “*Nun in dieser Lüfte Kreise, / Den man Atmosphaera nennt, / Lebt auf wunderbare Weise / Alles, was man sieht und kennt. / Außer ihr müßt alles sterben: / Alles würde schnell verderben, / Das sich nun durch sie erhält. / Sie is bloß der Geist der Welt*” (BRÜGGEMANN ed., pp. 296–297).

published a commented German translation of *Timäus der Lokrier von der Weltseele*.⁸² Friedrich SCHLEGEL also composed a poem with the title *Weltseele* (1800)⁸³ on reading SCHELLING's eponymous study, and somewhat desultorily applied the concept of the world soul in his 1800–1801 university lectures on *Transcendentalphilosophie*, in Jena.⁸⁴ Next, KANT in the *Opus postumum*, in the *Übergang von den metaphysischen Anfangsgründen der Naturwissenschaft zur Physik*, in one passage of the 12th convolute, second sheet, did not exclude that a *Weltseele* may be made identified as the principle of organic growth in living bodies.⁸⁵ SCHLEIERMACHER, then, seems to have

⁸² (FÜLLEBORN, G. G.): "*Timäus der Lokrier von der Weltseele*" in *Beyträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie, Neuntes Stück* (1798), pp. 1–57. The translation and the commentary were published anonymously, we follow H. R. SCHLETTE in the identification of the author (cf. SCHLETTE, p. 244). FÜLLEBORN, in the part *Allgemeine Betrachtungen über den Lokrier* (pp. 36–57), gives an essentially rationalistic-demythologizing account of the genesis of the *Weltseele*-theory as he suggests that "*Wie die Alten auf ihren Traum von einer Weltseele haben kommen können, ist sehr erklärlich. Die Menge von Göttern und Dämonen, womit man frühzeitig alle Welt bevölkerte, durfte ja von der Philosophie nur in einen alles durchströmenden Weltgeist zusammengezogen werden, so war das Produkt fertig etc*" (p. 42). He discusses in the same tone even PLATO's ideas concerning the soul of the world (cf. pp. 54–55).

⁸³ The sonnet *Die Weltseele* was first published in the *Athenäum* (III/2, 1800; p. 235), then again in the *Gedichte* of 1823 (cf. KFSa, vol. V, p. 302).

⁸⁴ SCHLEGEL, in the course of the metaphysical derivation of the concept of 'matter' (defined by him as a 'chaos of elements'), argues that 'matter' implies a neutralisation of the inherent differences between the elements. Then he looks for the physical point in nature where such a neutralisation or indifference is realized, and asserts that "*Dieser Indifferenzpunkt kann nun nicht auf einem oder dem andern Weltkörper seyn, sondern er muß in die Mitte zwischen beyden fallen, also da, wohin wir den Äther setzen. Der Äther ist demnach die allgemeine WeltSeele, das Leben der Natur. Der CentralÄther ist die Materie selbst. ... Der CentralÄther ist allgegenwärtig*" (KFSa, vol. XII, p. 38) 'Central aether' (the aether in between two celestial bodies) is thus the physically omnipresent principle of materiality. A Spinozistically-Cabbalistically inspired metaphysics seems combined with this physics as SCHLEGEL, examining now the concepts of 'form' and 'substance', contends that "*Die Substanz aber ist eins, ewig, unendlich*" and puts the question "*Warum ist das Unendliche aus sich herausgegangen und hat sich endlich gemacht?*" (*Ibid.*, p. 39). The lack of strong conceptual clarity and of a strict logic of exposition in his discourse, despite the presence of original metaphysical intuition, may have entailed that SCHLEGEL's lectures were, as a matter of historical fact, abandoned by many of his students (cf. J.-J. ANSTETT's *Einleitung, ibid.*, p. XX).

⁸⁵ KANT's difficult-to-interpret statement is found in a passage where he strives to define the notion of the organic body: "*Es muß ein einfaches, mithin immaterielles Wesen, ob das Teil der Sinnenwelt, oder ein von ihr unterschiedenes Wesen als Bewegter außer diesem Körper oder in ihm angenommen werden (denn die Materie kann sich nicht selbst organisieren und nach Zwecken wirken). Ob dieses Wesen (gleichsam als Weltseele) Verstand, oder bloß ein, den Wirkungen nach, dem Verstande analogisches Vermögen besitze: hierüber liegt das Urteil außer den Grenzen unserer Einsicht*" (HEIDEMANN ed., pp. 49–50; underlining added). The concept of the *Weltseele* is thus problematically involved in the definition of the organic body, as the teleologically operating principle of organization, which may not be given in the purely material constitution of an organic body. KANT in this late note hypothetically qualifies the *Weltseele* as an immaterial being, and leaves undecided the question whether it is vested with reason or only with some analogous capacity (cf. CUDWORTH's plastic nature). It seems further that this world soul is not to be identified with the principle of the unity of the physical universe, heat matter (*Wärmestoff*), because that

discovered a particular version of this theory in HERACLITUS' doctrine of fire in his edition of the Ephesian's fragments, *Herakleitos der dunkle, von Ephesos* (1807).⁸⁶ A similar interpretive effort concerning several Pre-Socratics is August BOECKH's *Ueber die Bildung der Weltseele im Timaeos des Platon* (also of 1807), which, however, mainly treats PLATO's conception of the world soul.⁸⁷

Though this list is probably uncomplete,⁸⁸ several important remarks may be made on account of it. Let us point out, first and foremost, that the *Weltseele*-theory came into vogue almost exactly simultaneously with the SPINOZA-renaissance and the BRUNO-renaissance. It is just as striking to note that the interest for this theory is manifested in the decade in which Kantian transcendental philosophy and criticism of 'dogmatic' theology developed and gained recognition as well as met resistance. It seems, therefore, that the *Weltseele*-theory was perceived as, in some manner, congenial with Spinozism and Brunonian mysticism, while at the same time inimical to, and a remedy of, Kantianism as a complex, critical epistemological, ontological and theological system (ignoring now KANT's problematic statement on the *Weltseele* in the *Übergang* of the OP).

is material and all-pervasive. It is perhaps needless to add that even in the *Opus postumum*, KANT continued to refuse to identify the *Weltseele* with *God*, as several statements prove in the theological parts of the OP. Our list of the occurrences of a theory of the world soul is here, however, restricted to texts that display a *positive* (or at least, purely historical) relation towards this theory. This is why we do not deal with the rest of the OP, or with KANT's other negative statements concerning the soul of the world in *De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principii* (§ 19), *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (B 669), *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (§ 72), the *Vorlesungen über die Metaphysik* (ed. PÖLITZ, p. 338) and in the *Reflexionen* (R 6119, R 6284).

⁸⁶As is known, SCHLEIERMACHER's collection is the first modern edition of HERACLITUS (except for STEPHANUS's *Poesis philosophos*, Geneva, 1573, a very uncomplete collection of the fragments of several pre-Socratics). In SCHLEIERMACHER's Stoically coloured interpretation of HERACLITUS's doctrine of eternal fire, the living human body, when asleep, breathes in the ambient rational divine element (τὸ περιέχον φρενῆρες), a kind of world soul. The appearance of reason and consciousness in the condition of wakefulness is attributed by SCHLEIERMACHER to the circumstance that the body then participates in the surrounding sublime and reasonable fire (which is also the *göttliche Vernunft*) not only via the nose, but also via the eyes and the ears. The communication of divine reason with the human understanding is thus realized through the circulation of eternal fire within the individual body: "Denn sofern nur durch das Athmen die göttliche Vernunft eingesogen wird, läßt sich ein solcher Unterschied nicht erklären, da ja das Athmen gleichmäßig fort dauert im Schlaf wie im Wachen. Allein nicht nur durch das Athmen geschieht jenes, sondern durch alle Thore, welche dem Leibe eine Gemeinschaft eröffnen mit dem περιέχον... Je mehr nun jene edleren Sinne geöffnet waren, desto mehr; bei gleich guter und feuriger Beschaffenheit der Seele, ist Wahrheit in den Vorstellungen des Menschen; je mehr aber die Gemeinschaft mit dem περιέχον aufgehoben ist, desto mehr nimmt Schein und Irrthum überhand" (SCHLEIERMACHER, pp. 516 and 518).

⁸⁷First published in Heidelberg, 1807; see bibliography. The erudite BOECKH had long dealt with philological and philosophical aspects of the *Timaeos* – see also his *Specimen editionis Timaei Platonis dialogi*, also of 1807.

⁸⁸For more details on the *Weltseele* in GOETHE, HÖLDERLIN, NOVALIS and Fr. SCHLEGEL, see SCHLETTE, pp. 180–195. On the world soul in HERDER, MAIMON, MEINERS ("Geschichte der Wissenschaften in Griechenland..."), in *Gemischte philosophische Schriften*, Leipzig 1775, vol. I, pp. 1–59) and HEINSE (in the novel *Ardinghello*, 1786), cf. also VIEILLARD-BARON, especially pp. 400–410. Ciliquis nim zzriusci

It has often been said that the chief philosophical aspiration of the early German Romantic generation was to demonstrate the collective unity and the divine character of the natural world, the (quasi-)situational presence of God and man's participation in the life divine. Let us now see how these strivings are articulated in Franz von BAADER's *Vom Wärmestoff*, by virtue of the concept of the world soul, this intermediary between God and Nature.

Part IV
The Philosophical Postulation of the World
Soul in Early German Romanticism

Chapter 9

The World Soul in Baader's and Schelling's Conceptions

1 *BAADER'S Theory of Heat Matter As the Soul of the World (Vom Wärmestoff, seiner Vertheilung, Bindung und Entbindung, vorzüglich beim Brennen der Körper, 1786) in Relation to KANT'S Idea of 'materia caloris', BOERHAAVE'S Chemical Idea of 'verus Ignis', LAVOISIER'S Idea of 'le calorique' and VOLTA'S Idea of 'fuoco elementare', on the One Hand, and to NEWTON'S Mechanical Idea of 'aether', on the Other*

“For in him we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28). The fundamental metaphysical intuition of the philosophy of Franz Xaver von BAADER (1765–1841) seems inspired by these words of the Apostle. He cites them at the beginning of his mature, Cabbalistic natural philosophical-metaphysical synthesis, *On Lightning as the Father of Light (Ueber den Blitz als Vater des Lichtes, 1815)*, and often says that we ‘*leben und weben*’ in a divine element also in his first published text, *On Heat Matter (Vom Wärmestoff, Vienna and Leipzig, 1786)* when characterizing heat matter, *Wärmestoff* or *Wärmematerie*. In this, at first sight, thermodynamical treatise, heat matter is conceived by him essentially as a universal material representative of God, in which man and the entire natural world are immersed, in short, as he himself says, as a *Weltseele*. Let us consider the relevant natural scientific and metaphysical doctrines of his study.

Vom Wärmestoff is the work of a 19-year-old student.¹ As Eu. SUSINI points out, it is BAADER’S longest work; throughout his later career, BAADER composed shorter

¹Concerning the date of composition, HOFFMANN (vol. 3, p. III) says that *Vom Wärmestoff* “*schon ein Jahr vorher (1785) im Wesentlichen vollendet, also sicher nicht früher als im J. 1784 ausgearbeitet, vermuthlich schon 1783 oder 1782 angefangen worden war. Baader hatte also die Schrift vermuthlich schon im 17te n Lebensjahre begonnen, jedenfalls sie nicht später als im 19ten vollendet.*” SAUTER (pp. 261–262, footnote) is approximately of the same opinion. BAADER himself gives a hint about the date of composition as he writes at the head of the *Zusätze* of his text

though more incisive exposés.² But *Vom Wärmestoff* is also different in that it displays a more strictly natural scientific character than his later, Cabbalistically-theosophically coloured treatises like, again, *Ueber den Blitz* or *Ueber das pythagoräische Quadrat in der Natur* (1798). In fact, *Vom Wärmestoff* aims to make a transition from empirical-experimental physics to metaphysics, in search of the imperceptible, supra-sensible (though not immaterial) principles of material-phenomenal reality.

In brief, BAADER'S natural scientific thesis is that the phenomena related to *heat* at least are explained *not* by the vibration or movement of the minutest particles of matter (which was the position of contemporary mechanistic-atomistic physics), but *chemically*, by the existence and incessant spontaneous-autonomous operation of an imperceptible material substance, *Wärmestoff*. This embodies heat, and, dissolving the matter of our planet as a universal *menstruum* or solvent, imparts heat with every substance on Earth not by mechanical friction, but in virtue of a chemical *affinity*. It is, further, just possible, says BAADER, that not only heat but also light, electricity, the atmospheric or underground 'nobler finer heat', and magnetism are reducible to a single universal material (aetherial) principle and agent, which sovereignly produces all the relevant phenomena. The demonstration of the identity (unicity) of that principle is, however, the task of future generations of natural scientists.³

To be sure, the idea that a separate, omnipresent 'heat matter' exists is not BAADER'S invention. Among the better-known representatives of heat matter theory in the Age of Reason, we find the early KANT (*Meditationum quarundam de igne succincta delineatio*, 1755)⁴ as well as the epochal chemists H. BOERHAAVE

that "*Eigentlich sollte dies Werkchen schon vorige Ostermesse (i.e., in 1785) im Druck erschienen sein, und man findet es auch wirklich im Universalkataloge unter den bereits fertigen Büchern angezeigt. Ein unvorhergesehener Zufall hielt indessen seine Vollendung bis jetzt auf...*" (HOFFMANN et al., eds., vol. 3, p. 173).

²Cf. SUSINI, vol. II, p. 57. SUSINI'S chapter (vol. II, pp. 57–75) concerning *Vom Wärmestoff* is essentially a presentation of BAADER'S chemical and general natural scientific doctrines, although he points out that "*Vom Wärmestoff est moins un traité de physique qu'une métaphysique*" (p. 69; SUSINI'S emphasis).

³"*Ein ätherisches Fluidum ist es ohne Zweifel freilich, das im Licht uns erleuchtet und erfreut, in der wohlthätigen Wärme uns belebt und überall Wohlsein ausbreitet, das wir in dem elektrischen Strome, der edleren feineren Wärme, als grosses Agens in der Natur in den höchsten Luftregionen, wie in der Erde tiefsten Schlünden, allmächtig wirken sehen und anstaunen, das endlich im magnetischen Fluidum von Pol zu Pol strömt; und ohne Zweifel werden auch wir oder unsere Nachkommen die Identität desselben allregierenden Principiums in allen diesen seinen herrlichen Offenbarungen darthun und beweisen. Bis dahin aber lasst uns mit Worten trennen, was schon in der Natur wirklich durch unterscheidende Charaktere getrennt ist....*" (HOFFMANN et al., eds., vol. III, pp. 24–25). SUSINI reads the clause "*der edleren feineren Wärme... ..tiefsten Schlünden*" as an apposition to "*dem elektrischen Strome*" (cf. SUSINI'S translation of the above passage, vol. II, p. 66: "*...le courant électrique –cette chaleur plus délicate et plus subtile...*"). This interpretation seems somewhat less likely, insofar as electricity may hardly be thought to operate 'in the deepest abysses of the earth' (though it may be thought to be present in the higher strata of the atmosphere).

⁴AK, vol. I, pp. 371–384.

(see chapter *De igne* in *Elementa chemiae*/1, 1732), A.-L. LAVOISIER (*De la combinaison de la matière du feu avec les fluides évaporables*, 1777, etc.), and A. VOLTA (article 'Calore' in tome III of SCOPOLI's Italian translation and adaptation, 1783, of MACQUER's *Dictionnaire de chimie*).⁵

In his short early treatise, KANT anticipates some of the essential natural scientific premisses of BAADER's theory of heat matter and of SCHELLING's theory of aether, as he argues that all bodies are permeated by an elastic substance, which is the principle of the cohesion of their material parts, as well as of their expansion and contraction (i.e., of their elasticity). This substance, presumably of non-corpuscular nature, is further capable of a self-generated vibration, whereby it produces heat (*calor*). It is thus a *dynamical* as well as *mechanical* principle. KANT then identifies this *materia elastica* with fire-matter, *materia ignis/caloris*, which is, in turn, *aether*; and he contends (like later BAADER and SCHELLING) that in solid bodies, it may be in a bound condition.⁶

Next, BOERHAAVE's very popular textbook (which appeared simultaneously in Leiden, London, Tübingen, Leipzig and Venice, and went into some ten editions by the middle of the century) is actually the edited transcript of BOERHAAVE's lecture

⁵See MACQUER in bibliography. VOLTA's dictionary article was edited by B. N. SCOPOLI, and inserted in his Italian translation ("*Dizionario di chimica*") of MACQUER's dictionary (cf. EN, vol. VII, p. 4). SCOPOLI is thus to no small degree co-author of the text (see on this CRELL's remark: SCOPOLI "sie (diese Abhandlung) gemeinschaftlich mit Hr. Volta ausgearbeitet, und eigentlich bestimmt hat, einen Artikel in seiner italienischen Ausgabe des Macquerischen Wörterbuchs auszumachen"; CRELL ed., p. 428). On many points, SCOPOLI essentially modified MACQUER's original ideas as well. BAADER constantly used this dictionary article while composing his own study. – VOLTA's dictionary article was published also apart, under the title "*Memoria intorno al calore*" (Pavia, G. Bianchi, 1783; see SANTANGELO and GARBARINO, and EN, vol. VII, p. 4). In his study, BAADER used CRELL's German translation of this version, which came out under the title "*Abhandlung über die Wärme, v. Herrn Scopoli, und Herrn Volta*", in part 12 of the *Neueste Entdeckungen in der Chemie* (1783), and was later re-printed in part 3 of an *Auswahl aller eigenthümlichen Abhandlungen und Beobachtungen aus den neuesten Entdeckungen in der Chemie...* (1786, pp. 428–524; see CRELL ed. in bibliography). We consulted this second edition, but we shall go back to the Italian original here for a brief exposition of VOLTA's views on heat matter.

⁶See the general corollary of Section 1, and propositions VII and VIII of Section 2: "*Omne itaque corpus, si recte sentio, partibus continetur solidis, intercedente materia quadam elastica ceu vinculo unitis. Particulae elementares, hac intermista, quamvis a contactu mutuo remotae, tamen huius ope semet attrahunt et artius profecto colligantur, quam per contactum immediatum fieri posset. ... simul in promptu est, quomodo, detracta ex interstitiis ex parte materia illa uniente, propius sibi possint elementa accedere et volumen contrahere; contra ea, aucta vel quantitate vel etiam elasticitate ipsius, corpus volumine auferre et particulae a se invicem recedere absque cohaesionis iactura possint.*" (AK, vol. I, p. 375) "*Prop. VII. Materia ignis non est nisi (...) materia elastica, quae corporum quorumlibet elementa, quibus intermista est, colligat; eiusque motus undulatorius s. vibratorius idem est, quod caloris nomine venit*" (*Ibid.*, p. 376). "*Prop. VIII. Materia caloris non est nisi ipse aether (s. lucis materia) valida attractionis (s. adhaesionis) corporum vi intra ipsorum interstitia compressus*" (*Ibid.*, p. 377, underlining added). For a commentary, see RITZEL, pp. 29–31. KANT posits a "*Materie der Wärme*" again in his *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft* (1786), *Dynamik, Allgemeine Anmerkung 3* (AK/IV, pp. 530 and 532 etc.).

courses in chemistry. In Tome One, Part II, the long and accurate treatise “*On Fire*” (“*De igne*”, pp. 126–284) was one of BAADER'S most important sources for writing his *Vom Wärmestoff*, as well as one of the major, determinative and authoritative sources of modern heat and combustion theory. BOERHAAVE, who ably put his chemical conclusions into a wider philosophical context, and often made further theological references to the “*all-wise Author of Nature*”, made it likely, by dint of a large number of scientific experiments, that there is a created, omnipresent and all-pervasive, but imperceptible material, “*verus Ignis*”, “*true fire*”, which is constantly agitated, and has a heating and expansive effect on all matter.⁷

BOERHAAVE'S ‘true fire’ thus also has the attribute of spontaneous action, whereby it may be regarded as a chemical precursor to BAADER'S somewhat more philosophical idea of heat matter.

LAVOISIER, before being tragically guillotined in 1794, authored very many shorter and longer articles and academic reports in which he strove to prove that there is a separate, omnipresent heat substance. Perhaps the earliest exposition of his views concerning this chemical element is found in “*On the Combination of the Element of Fire with Volatile Fluids*” (*De la combinaison de la matière du feu avec les fluides évaporables*, 1777). In this, he asserts that our entire planet, as it were, swims in an ocean of this subtle fluid, which penetrates every part of the Earth. This subtle matter may exist in a free and in a chemically bound condition and tends to keep a balance of presence in physical bodies.⁸

Some of the most essential elements of BAADER'S theory of the *Wärmestoff* are already present in this idea. It was LAVOISIER'S conviction that heat matter

⁷“*Igitur ego deinceps Ignem appellabo illam rem, incognitam caeterum, quae istam in se proprietatem habet, ut corpora omnia consistentia, & fluentia, penetret, atque eo ipso eadem dilatet in spatia majora. ... Pro gradu quoque incrementi illius & augetur extensio corporum.* (p. 175) ... *Est vero nihil majore dignum memoria, quam Ignem... se penetrare per omnia, vel densissima licet, corporum genera, eaque cuncta calefacere, expandere, comburere, fundere, illum lucere, splendere, coruscare, denique eadem omnino cuncta praestare, quae verus Ignis efficere cognoscitur.* (p. 177) ... *ipse Ignis... semper praesens existit in omni loco; licet non semper ibi nobis detegatur vulgariter Ignis praesentiam indagantibus. ... Neque tantum spatio omni ita inest Ignis; imo vero, & in omni quoque corpore, etiam rarissimo, vel solidissimo, aequaliter distributus haeret.* (p. 187) ... *satis certum inde sequi creditur, ... quod ille ipse Ignis ita haerens in omni spatio & corpore, ibidem semper moveri, & movere, pergat...* (p. 189)”. All citations from BOERHAAVE'S *Elementa chemiae*; see also the great recapitulation on p. 190. See bibliography under BOERHAAVE.

⁸“*Je supposerai dans ce mémoire, et dans ceux qui suivront, que la planète que nous habitons est environnée de toutes parts d'un fluide très-subtil, qui pénètre, à ce qu'il paraît, sans exception, tous les corps qui la composent; que ce fluide, que j'appellerai fluide igné, matière du feu, de la chaleur et de la lumière, tend à se mettre en équilibre dans tous les corps, mais qu'il ne les pénètre tous avec une égale facilité; enfin, que ce fluide existe tantôt dans un état de liberté, tantôt sous forme fixe, et combiné avec les formes.*” (LAVOISIER, vol. II, p. 212; LAVOISIER'S emphasis.) For LAVOISIER'S more detailed position on heat matter, see also his *De l'action du calorique sur les corps solides* (1792; LAVOISIER, vol. II, pp. 739–764), the *Du passage des corps solides à l'état liquide par l'action du calorique* (1792; LAVOISIER, vol. II, pp. 765–772) and *De l'action du calorique sur les corps liquides* (1792; LAVOISIER, vol. II, pp. 773–782) etc.

("le calorique") is a 'simple substance' (chemical element), just like, according to him, light, oxygen, hydrogen, phosphorus, gold or iron (see *Tableau des substances simples* in his *Traité élémentaire de chimie*, 1789, *Seconde partie*; LAVOISIER, vol. I, p. 135). In *Sur la pesanteur de la matière de la chaleur* (without year of publication), he argued on the basis of his precisely quantified experiments that *le calorique* has practically no weight, i.e., that it is imponderable (and consequently, we may suppose, imperceptible).⁹ BAADER will also classify heat matter as a supra-sensible *Urstoff* ("...das Wärmemenstruum ein Urstoff ist, der sich nicht einzeln darstellen, oder in Gefässen sperren... lässt...").¹⁰

Finally, VOLTA begins expounding his position on heat matter (which he calls indistinctively *fuoco puro elementare*, *materia calorifica*, *materia del calore* and *fluido igneo*) by saying that he accepts the tradition which asserts the existence of this *sui generis* substance because all experiments have undoubtedly proved its being.¹¹ Among the essential attributes of heat matter, he (like BAADER) also admits heating power, fluidity, innate mobility, expansive force and constant agitation, and contends (again, like BAADER) that it may be absorbed and bound by the particular bodies.¹² In line with LAVOISIER, whose publications he keenly followed, he also identified heat matter—pure fire as a distinct, incessantly operating chemical element.¹³ Besides all this, he certainly contributed to BAADER'S study by his extensive account of the *status quaestionis* of XVIIIth-century thermodynamic research.

But it seems to have been BAADER'S original idea to identify this postulated chemical substance with the *Weltseele*. The rationale for this identification was the attribute of spontaneous action, which BAADER also ascribed to heat matter. By virtue of this attribute, heat matter appeared as the principle that not only keeps the natural forces in a universal balance, but also as an agent that constantly *upsets* this balance insofar as it is intrinsically *per se* agitated and consequently, as an all-pervasive immanent material, also agitates the substance of the entire planet along with itself. It is hereby also the principle of life, which incessantly overcomes the dead inertia, and the tendency towards crystallisation, of pure matter:

⁹"...la matière de la chaleur peut être considérée comme n'ayant pas de pesanteur sensible dans les expériences de chimie." (*Ibid.*, vol. V, p. 293.)

¹⁰HOFFMANN et al. eds., vol. III, p. 74.

¹¹"...generalmente i Chimici si tennero attaccati alla sentenza, che rifonde il calore in una sostanza sui generis, che è il Fuoco Elementare... ..essa non che opinione probabilissima ci pare una verità indubitabilmente stabilita da tutte le esperienze, che servono di base a questa teoria" (EN, vol. VII, pp. 5–6; VOLTA'S emphasis).

¹²"Non così il fuoco puro, il quale, ripetiamolo, non v'è prova finora... che abiti mai ne' corpi privo di quella forza espansiva, in cui è riposta la sua virtù calorifica, e senza produrvi vero, e real calore. Solamente questa innata sua forza, ed azione calorifera essenziale è smorzata in parte, frenata, e debilitata dalle forze attraenti delle minime particelle de' corpi..." (*Ibid.*, p. 17, cf. also p. 19; VOLTA'S emphasis).

¹³"...il fuoco nella sua natura, cioè in istato di elemento puro essenzialmente calorifico, sempre fluido, ed espansibile, sempre in azione più, o men forte, anche quando forma un principio de' corpi..." (*Ibid.*, p. 41).

... (this finest and lightest fluid,) which, by necessity, constantly strives after a condition of balance, appears to be the first principle of all continuous transformation and, consequently, all life and decay on our planet. It is elastic by itself; it is an omnipresent, fine and invisible material, which, in uninterrupted motion and activity outside and inside our planet, penetrates and vivifies it all over, with its all-pervasive breath, as a supreme commandant and supreme destroyer and, consequently, as a real soul of the world.¹⁴

The soul of the world is thus omnipresent, directs and controls all natural phenomena (organic and inorganic alike) related to movement, change, growth and decline, and is supra-sensible but material. It is, therefore, by no means identical with God, who is, for BAADER, the only-wise, *transcendent* Creator and supreme Ruler of the universe, the one who has set the eternal bounds (laws) within which (according to which) nature must exist.¹⁵

The world soul is, further, *not* the principle of the *unity* (cohesion) of the physical world for BAADER, like it is for PLOTINUS, for example. Being material, the *Weltseele* is, in this respect, subordinate to the elementary force of universal cohesion or attraction ('love'), by which all matter must abide.¹⁶ As it is thus *not*

¹⁴ "... (das zarteste und leichteste Fluidum) ... in nothwendig rastlosem Streben nach Gleichgewicht als erstes Principium alles steten Umwandelns, folglich alles Lebens und alles Zerstörens auf demselben (scil. auf unserem Planeten) erscheint; eine selbstständig elastische, allverbreitete, zarte und unsichtbare Materie, die in immerwährender Bewegung und Thätigkeit als Allgebieterin und Allzerstörerin auf und in unserem Erdbealle, folglich als eigentliche Weltseele mit ihrem alles durchdringenden Hauche ihn überall durchströmt und alles belebt." (HOFFMANN et al. eds., vol. III, pp. 29–30. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, underlining added.) BAADER ascribes the same attribute of spontaneous, intrinsic, vivifying action to *Wärmestoff-Weltseele* also in another passage, where he says that heat matter is a "verborgenes, aber allverbreitetes Principium, das mächtig und rastlos dem Krystallisations- und Configurationstrieb aller Materienaggregate entgegenstrebt, Gleichgewicht und Partialruhe der physischen Kräfte stört, und dagegen immerwährend jenen inneren Zwist und Gährung derselben, in dem alles lebt, und ohne den alles in Todesruhe starren würde, anfacht und unterhält" (*Ibid.*, p. 42).

¹⁵ Cf. BAADER'S only directly theological proposition in *Vom Wärmestoff*: "Wären nicht selbst der Natur in ihren Operationen und Zerlegungen vom Alleinweisen Schöpfer und Regierer des Alls engere Grenzen vorgeschrieben und festbestimmt, die sie ewig nicht zu überschreiten vermag, ... so würde, glaube ich, gar bald diese grosse, lebendige, immer nach einartigen, unveränderlichen, herrlichen Gesetzen fortwirkende Welt-Organisation zu Trümmern gehen..." (*ibid.*, p. 19).

¹⁶ Cf. BAADER'S hymnic elaboration on universal love in part V of book 1: "Liebe ist das allgemeine Band, das alle Wesen im Universum an und ineinander bindet und verwebt. Man nenne es nun allgemeine Schwere, Attraction, Cohäsion, Affinität, Aetzbarkeit... Genug, das allgemeine Streben aller Theile der Materie gegen einander zur Vereinigung ist... Attraction, Bindung ist hiermit unantastbares Factum, Phänomen, das vielleicht keine weitere Erklärung verträgt, aber als solches auch keiner bedarf. Ohne Affinität kein Ganzes, keine Welt, nicht einmal gedenkbar; unser Erdbealle ein wüstes, ewig todes Chaos, ein Brei ohne Gestaltung und Form, hiemit ein wahres Unding. Wenn dieses Gesetz allgemein durch das Universum hinwirkt, wie wäre eine Ausnahme davon bei einer, am Ende doch nur irdischen, Materie, gedenkbar? – Und doch sträubt man sich im voraus so sehr gegen den Ausdruck: gebundene Wärmematerie" (*Ibid.*, p. 33). – Note that BAADER does not contend that the *Weltseele* is the principle of the universal cohesion of the world, but that it is *subject to* that universal cohesion.

the principle of the numerical identity of the world, it can hardly be conceived as the substantial form of the material frame of the universe as a cosmic organic body, though it *is* the independent principle of all natural change and of life. Hence, the world is, for BAADER, not a cosmic living being (like it is for PLATO): the proposition that the *Weltseele* animates the world refers to the world as a *distributive unit* only.

It is also by the world soul's subjection to the principle of cohesion, argues BAADER, that it exists in a bound (unfree) condition as well, inside every corporeal substance, in a measure proportional with the specific affinity of the individual substance with the world soul. The individual substances become thereby more and more assimilated to the fluidity and elasticity of the universal solvent as they absorb and bind more and more of it. Further, between the individual bodies, there is a continuous thermodynamic interaction, which is entertained by the universal active (and not simply reactive or mechanical) principle of movement, the *Weltseele*.

Perhaps the most important natural philosophical thesis of BAADER's study is that such thermo-dynamic interactions in particular, and many natural operations of our entire planet in general,¹⁷ take place not *mechanically*, according to the laws of Newtonian physics, but (as we have suggested above) according to completely different principles of *affinity*, sympathy and chemical combination.¹⁸ In Newtonian natural science, the unknown principle of the universal attraction between natural bodies, as well as of gravitation between the heavenly bodies, is – conjecturally – explained by the purely mechanical *vibrations* of an omnipresent, all-pervasive, supra-sensible but material agent, *aether*. This idea might perhaps be seen as NEWTON's hypothetical version of a natural scientific world soul theory. See,

¹⁷In the texts here examined, the best of BAADER's philosophical attention goes to the condition of planet Earth, and barely extends to our solar system, let alone beyond that.

¹⁸Cf. SUSINI's account of BAADER's vision of chemical affinity in *Vom Wärmestoff*: "*Le processus chimique est un phénomène mystérieux qui fait que le liquide et la matière solide, le sel, s'unissent en vertu d'une certaine affinité. Le sel n'est pas entraîné après avoir été pulvérisé; il est réduit. Et cela implique non pas un état statique de la nature qui fait que les choses ne peuvent être transformées que grâce à une action mécanique de l'une sur l'autre; il faut supposer derrière ces phénomènes un dynamisme, une énergie, un principe, agissant à la manière d'un être vivant, d'un organisme opérant une métamorphose*" (SUSINI, vol. II, p. 75). SAUTER situates *Vom Wärmestoff* similarly in the history of ideas and the natural sciences: "*Viel wichtiger ist die Tatsache, daß Baader inmitten der rein physikalisch-mathematischen Naturbetrachtung im Sinne eines Galilei, Descartes und Newton eine empirisch fundierte Naturspekulation wagte und mit seiner Polaritätsphilosophie wohl als erster für die Naturbetrachtung der Romantik die Bahn frei machte. Das ist die geistesgeschichtliche, aber auch naturwissenschaftliche Bedeutung dieser Schrift, daß sie die Theorie von «mechanischer Vibration, Stoß und Druck usw. als der einzigen Ursache aller Wärmeerregung» umstürzte und von der «erfahrenden Chemie» die Folgerung übernahm, daß sich der «rätsonnierende Schulphysiker» nicht mehr unterfangen dürfe, «mit einem Strick, und einem Stück Holz in der Hand alle jene geheime Naturoperationen erklären zu wollen» (3, 10)" (SAUTER, p. 265. SAUTER's emphasis; his reference is to HOFFMANN et al., eds., vol. III, p. 10).*

e.g., his early letter to BOYLE, of 28 February 1679,¹⁹ on the cause of universal attraction, or the better known text of query 21 of book III of the second English edition (1717) of the *Opticks*, concerning gravitation:

*Is not this medium (aether) much rarer within the dense bodies of the sun, stars, planets and comets, than in the empty celestial spaces between them? And in passing from them to great distances, doth it not grow denser and denser perpetually; and thereby cause the Gravity of those great bodies towards one another, and of their parts towards the bodies; every body endeavouring to go from the denser parts of the medium towards the rarer? ... if the Elastick force of this medium be exceeding great, it may suffice to impel bodies from the denser parts of the medium towards the rarer, with all that power which we call Gravity. And that the Elastick force of this medium is exceeding great, may be gathered from the swiftness of its vibrations.*²⁰

BAADER'S concept of the heat matter-world soul: elasticity, activity, expansion and expansive force are attributed to this medium by NEWTON and BAADER alike. In fact, the early NEWTON hypothetically conceived of 'aether' even as the created, material cause of the physical frame of nature, and as a "humid active matter, for ye continual uses of nature".²¹ Thus, NEWTON'S aether in many ways takes on the aspect of a quasi-world soul. But, from BAADER'S point of view, the emphasis of the theory was on the blind mechanic manner in which aether operates. It is, hence, not by chance that BAADER avoided applying the term 'aether' to his *Wärmestoff*.²²

¹⁹"And first I suppose that there is diffused through all places an aethereal substance capable of contraction & dilatation, strongly elastick, & in a word much like air in all respects, but far more subtile. ... 2 I suppose this aether pervades all gross bodies... And this I suppose (with others) to be... one of ye main causes why ye parts of all bodies cohere... 4 When two bodies moving towards one another come neare together I suppose ye aether between them to grow rarer then before... 5 ...at length, when they come so neare together that the excess of pressure of ye external aether, wch surrounds ye bodies, above yt of ye rarefied aether wch is between them, is so great as to overcome ye reluctance wch ye bodies have from being brought together: then will that excess of pressure drive them with violence together & make them adhere strongly to one another..." (RUPERT et al., eds., vol. II, pp. 289–290.) – Attraction between physical bodies is, therefore, in NEWTON'S hypothesis, a phenomenon of simple mechanical (as BAADER says, 'maschinistische') suction, effected by 'aether'. At the end of his letter, then, NEWTON extended his conjecture to explain universal gravitation (*ibid.*, p. 295). Cf. also the General Scholium of the *Principia*.

²⁰HORSLEY ed., vol. 4, p. 224 (underlining added). This query is missing from the first English (1704) and the first Latin (1706) editions of the *Opticks*. See also queries 18–20 and 22–24 in the same book. – BAADER found fault with NEWTON'S mechanical explanation of gravitation especially in his *Ueber das pythagoräische Quadrat in der Natur* (cf. HOFFMANN et al., eds., vol. III, pp. 257–258).

²¹On the physical and biological functions NEWTON attributed to aether, see his letter to OLDENBURG, of 25 January 1676 (RUPERT et al. eds., vol. I, p. 414).

²²Cf. how KANT, in the *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft* (1786) differentiates between the mechanical and, respectively, chemical manners of operation of material bodies: "Die Wirkung bewegter Körper auf einander durch Mittheilung ihrer Bewegung heißt **mechanisch**; die der Materien aber, so fern sie auch in Ruhe durch eigene Kräfte wechselseitig die Verbindung ihrer Theile verändern, heißt **chemisch**. Dieser chemische Einfluß heißt **Auflösung**, so fern er die Trennung der Theile einer Materie zur Wirkung hat (die mechanische Theilung, z. B. durch einen

For BAADER, nature is *not* a machine, so the leading normative natural science must not be mechanics, but dynamics, i.e., a theory of natural change which conceives of natural substances essentially as *powers*, *δυνάμεις*.²³

This conception demands a different metaphysical concept of substance, which BAADER, apparently, takes over from HERDER's philosophy (*Gott*, see Section 14 of Chapter 7), and expounds in more detail in *Ueber das pythagoräische Quadrat in der Natur* (1798), a text he wrote on reading SCHELLING's *Von der Weltseele*. Although *Ueber das pythagoräische Quadrat* is significantly later than *Vom Wärmestoff*, the concept of substance as defined in it supports, from a metaphysical side, the dynamic-chemical idea of the affinity of natural substances in thermodynamic (and general physical) processes. In the wake of HERDER, BAADER contends that natural material substance is essentially a manifestation of powers, a *Kraftäußerung*.²⁴

When our author says that the essence of a material thing is the (contractive or expansive) power it displays, the point he wants to make is that not all interaction in nature can take place by simple mechanical collision or vibration. Between physical bodies, there are dynamic influences, '*dynamische Einflüsse*', and a natural interaction is hereby an immediate reciprocal action of the substantial powers of material things ("*eine unvermittelte Wechselwirkung von Kräften der Materie*").²⁵ Hence, the science of physics must be built on the concept of substance understood as *force*. The substance of a particular body, then, carries at least two fundamental forces, namely, that of expansion and that of contraction.

But what institutes natural substances? What is the principle of the principle of the substantial powers? This question emerges also on account of the concept of the 'world', because, as we have remarked above, the soul of the world is *not* seen by BAADER as the principle of substantiality or self-identity and numerical unity, of the material world. In fact, BAADER only considers planet Earth, but then the question is, again, what warrants the substantial unity of planet Earth, if not the soul of the world

*Keil, der zwischen die Theile einer Materie getrieben wird, ist also, weil der Keil nicht durch eigene Kraft wirkt, von einer chemischen gänzlich unterschieden): derjenige aber, der die Absonderung zweier durch einander aufgelöseten Materien zur Wirkung hat, ist die **Scheidung***" (AK, vol. IV, p. 530; KANT's emphases).

²³Cf. SAUTER's account of KANT's and BAADER's respective approaches to dynamic and mechanic natural science: "*Während Kant zeitlebens den Dynamismus mit dem Mechanismus für vereinbar hielt, betrachtete Baader die chemischen Erscheinungen als einen experimentellen Nachweis einer Naturwirklichkeit, welche ganz und gar nicht im Gebiete der mathematisch-physikalischen Kräfteebene liegt. Die chemische Erscheinungen haben eine «eigene Stelle und sie lassen sich nicht unter die der allgemeinen Physik fassen» (1793; 11, 372)*" (SAUTER, p. 266; the bracketed reference is to HOFFMANN et al., eds., vol. XI, p. 372).

²⁴Cf. "*Dieses Ding oder die Substanz jeder Materie (als einzeln und für sich beweglichen Raumerfüllenden) ist also mit dem Moment, womit sie ihre eigene ursprüngliche Bewegung (als schwer) vindicirt, eins und dasselbe. Sie muss folglich als eine Kraftäußerung betrachtet werden...*" (*Ueber das pythagoräische Quadrat in der Natur*; HOFFMANN et al., eds., vol. III, pp. 256).

²⁵*Ueber das pythagoräische Quadrat in der Natur*; *ibid.*, p. 259.

(Earth) as an internal form? The world soul (a concept tacitly dropped in *Ueber das pythagoräische Quadrat*) is not the principle of the substantial unity of our planet, and not the principle of the universal cohesion (and gravitation) prevalent on it. The principle instituting the substantiality of the individual physical substances, as well as that of *Mutter Erde* as a *collective* unit, is our Earth itself as the universal (planetary) individual, the *individual* by excellence, which has an *a priori* principle of self-identity, and which gives birth to and carries all particular physical substances.²⁶

In this argument, the point is, again, to account for the phenomenon of the cohesion of material parts within the unitary physical system of the Earth (and thereby, of the substantial unity of the planet) *not* on mechanical grounds. The force of cohesion, the *allgemeine Liebe* or *amor universalis*, to which the *Weltseele* itself is subjected, derives from the power of the planet as a higher, *collective* unit, which is endlessly more than the sum of its parts, more than itself as a *distributive* unit.²⁷ To rely on the sum of the material parts, argues BAADER, when we have to account for universal cohesion, would yield a completely inadequate, purely quantitative-mechanical understanding of the phenomenon, inasmuch as the *unitary character* of attraction remains unexplained. On the other hand, BAADER'S reference to the inherent power of the planetary Whole, on which all individuals depend, in which all of them partake, a move so characteristic of early German Romantic natural science, appeals to the *qualitative* difference there is between a whole as a unit and as a sum of parts, and to the logical-ontological precedence the whole takes of the part.

Although the soul of the world is, hence, not the *principle* of the substantial unity of the world, it is still part of a hypothetical unitary or henological²⁸ scheme of the powers animating the world. As we have pointed out above, BAADER suggests that the *Wärmestoff* is perhaps only one possible manifestation of a single, supra-phenomenal, material (aetherial) fluid. The unicity of this universal animating fluid is philosophically analogous to the substantial unity of the world. Again, we might discover HERDER'S influence (*Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*,

²⁶Cf. "Die Bedeutung des Wortes Substanz als selbständiger, sich selbst tragender oder stellender Träger (...) bereitet uns auch schon darauf vor, dass wir die vom Centrum (...) unseres Planeten aus strahlend sich verbreitende Kraft oder unsichtbare Allgewalt nicht etwa als Effect einer blossen Häufung einer zahllosen Menge nichtselbständiger einzelner Ursachen betrachten... Vielmehr müssen wir die Schwere als unmittelbare Aeusserung des allen einzelnen oder für sich beweglichen Körpern inwohnenden, sich in jedem derselben individualisirenden, und sie alle ununterbrochen stellenden, tragenden und systematisch (als Princip a priori) ordnenden Individuum betrachten..." (*ibid.*, p. 257.) A footnote in the same page further explains that the Earth is the "Individuum par excellence" (cf. also p. 264).

²⁷In KANT'S *Opus postumum*, by contrast, the all-pervading heat matter (*Wärmestoff*, *Äther*) is the principle of the collective unity of the world. As V. MATHIEU writes about the role of heat matter in the constitution of the physical system of the world, "Der »alldurchdringende« Äther fungiert als Basis der Welteinheit, weil er »der Anfang einer allgemeinen collectiven Einheit ist von deren Ursache sich schlechterdings kein Grund angeben läßt...«" (MATHIEU, p. 78; KANT-citation from AK, vol. XXII, p. 197).

²⁸We borrow the expression from SAUTER, p. 263 ("dieses henologische Prinzip").

book V, chapter 2)²⁹ as we read BAADER's proposition that *one* primordial fluid may be differently modified and present itself under apparently manifold aspects in nature:

The delight and bewilderment of the spectator keeps growing as he beholds the operation of one single principle of all this activity and life, spread out over the entire nature in one celestial stream of fire, outpouring into thousands and millions of organic parts. For it is one single fluid which works all these miracles. All natural philosophers (...) have unanimously acknowledged the existence and efficiency of this fluid, which is always one and the same, though it undergoes different modifications. As the first mover, it brings the otherwise dead nature into motion and animates it; hence, it is the first stimulus for the heartbeat of Creation. It seems that this essential and singular, fluid primary principle coagulates into bodies with the rest of the earthly materials most characteristically when it is modified into heat matter...³⁰

As we have seen, then, BAADER is, in *Vom Wärmestoffe*, in search of the supra-sensible but material principles of the natural phenomena, in order to account for them not in a mechanical but in an organic-chemical manner, arguing for the organic unity of nature. Besides *Wärmematerie-Weltseele*, he claims to identify as elements primordial earth, primordial water and primordial fire.³¹ While the natural scientific value of his youth work on heat matter, as all commentators point out and as he himself did not fail to realize, is questionable, the philosophical interest of *Vom Wärmestoff* is still great insofar as it suggests that nature is a unique divine whole, animated by a unitary divine power behind the phenomenal multiplicity, and penetrated by a material representative of God. The unicity of the divine power flows from the unicity of God, since God is, as the later BAADER proposes in *Ueber den Blitz als Vater des Lichtes*, in an inseparable connection with the world.³²

²⁹The reference to the *Ideen* is from SAUTER (cf. p. 263), the identification of the relevant chapter from us. See citation in Section 14 of Chapter 7.

³⁰*Sein* (*scil.* des Beobachters) *Vergnügen und Staunen wächst, wenn er das eine Principium all dieses Regens und Lebens in einem himmlischen Feuerstrom überall in der Natur verbreitet, und durch Tausende und Millionen Organe ausgegossen, wirken seht. Ein Fluidum ist es nemlich, das alle diese Wunder bewirkt, dessen Dasein und Wirksamkeit alle Naturforscher (...) einhellig anerkannten, und das immer Ein und Dasselbe, nur auf verschiedene Art abgeändert, als erstes Agens in der toden Natur diese überall rege macht und belebt, folglich erster Reiz ist dem Pulsschlage der Schöpfung. Als Wärmematerie modificirt scheint sich dieser wesentliche und einzige flüssige Uranfang am eigentlichsten mit den übrigen irdischen Stoffen zu verkörpern....* (*Vom Wärmestoff*; HOFFMANN et al., eds., vol. III, pp. 40–41. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI).

³¹Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 74, 167, 176 and 177.

³²Cf. F. SCHUMACHER's metaphysical summary of how BAADER saw the relationship between "Geist und Natur": "Für Baader ist die gesamte Wirklichkeit die Erscheinung eines organisch vorgestellten Lebens, dessen Träger die Grundkräfte des Einens, des Für-Sich-Seins und der Verleblichung sind. Zur Benennung dieser Grundkräfte können psychologische..., kosmisch-elementare..., logische..., physikalische... und physiologische Kategorien dienen. Die universale Geltung dieser Kategorien wurzelt in der Voraussetzung, daß sich alle Lebensvorgänge –äußere und innere, kosmische und menschliche, geistige und leibliche, göttliche und kreatürliche– ineinander spiegeln. Fragt man weiter, was sich da spiegelt, dann läßt sich antworten: unterschiedliche Konstellationen des unlösbaren Bandes von Geist und Natur" (SCHUMACHER, F.: "Baaders Denken als Gnosis" in KOSLOWSKI, P., ed., p. 281).

Though BAADER'S last mentioned idea is clearly a later, esoteric-Cabbalistic development of his thought, it is still important to us because of the focus of our investigation, which is the problematic relationship between the Finite and the Infinite, in early German Romanticism; and also because it may help us interpret *Vom Wärmestoff* retrospectively from the perspective of BAADER'S mature philosophy. The intellectual development reflected in *Ueber den Blitz* reinforces our conviction that the early German Romantic *Weltseele*-theories are essentially expressions of a philosophical endeavour to grasp the immediate, 'situational' *presence* of God in nature. Though in *Ueber den Blitz*, the concept of the soul of the world does not receive any role, it is evident that BAADER'S thought has evolved by now in the direction of positing a stronger metaphysical connection between Creator and creature, one that implies the creative, eternal presence of God in the generation of nature. In *Ueber den Blitz*, God is, namely, *in* the medium of the world, but freely so. He, as it were, 'lives through' (*durchwohnt*) the entire nature, while He nevertheless remains an inconceivable power. We meet essentially Cabbalistic (primarily, Böhman) expressions and ideas as we read BAADER arguing that God is the 'radiating centre' (*Centrum*) of nature, which is His 'periphery' (*Peripherie*, *Basis*).³³

The derivation of physical nature from the antagonistic unfolding of the internal nature of the divine substance, the dynamic interaction between the Divine and the Natural,³⁴ the undissociable *bond* of the Infinite with the Finite (in which the Infinite is mysteriously manifested), are all key Böhman-Cabbalistic metaphysical doctrines of early German Romanticism. In this sense, BAADER'S intellectual journey from the work of his youth, *Vom Wärmestoff*, is paralleled by (though also in many aspects different from) that of SCHELLING, whose early treatise, *Von der Weltseele*, is the topic of our following chapter.

³³Cf. the following statement: "*Aber wenn auch dieses (strahlende) Centrum (God) von seiner Peripherie (Basis) (nature) frei ist, so ist es darum doch nicht los von ihr, so wie umgekehrt, wenn gleich das Zentrum seiner Peripherie innewohnt, selbes von letzterer doch auch an seiner freien Durchwohnung nicht gehindert wird. Und so wohnt denn Gott als liebend und sich seiner Creatur fasslich machend (sie speisend) dieser inne, und durchwohnt sie doch auch zugleich als unbegreifliche, unfassliche Macht.*" (HOFFMANN et al., eds., vol. II, p. 38.) On BÖHME'S influence on BAADER, cf. SCHUMACHER'S opinion: "*Unübersehbar ist, daß der Autor (i.e., BAADER) in Jakob Böhme seinen Meister gefunden hat; Saint-Martin mußte an zweiter Stelle genannt werden. Nicht zu übersehen sind auch jene Spuren, welche auf esoterische, hermetische, alchemistische und kabbalistische Strömungen verweisen*" (KOSLOWSKI, P., ed., p. 283).

³⁴Cf., also in *Ueber den Blitz*, the following significant statement: "*Vielmehr ist mit und in jeder geschöpflichen Wirksamkeit... die des Schöpfers und Erhalters... schon überall gegeben und in und mit ihr dermassen gegenwärtig –in untrennbarem dynamischem Zusammenhang und zwar unterschieden, aber weder getrennt von ihr, noch vermischt mit ihr–{,} dass die Afficirung und Modificirung der einen Wirksamkeit auch die andere afficirt und modificirt, dass somit der Schöpfer durch das und in dem Geschöpf, das Geschöpf durch den Schöpfer berührbar ist und wirklich alle Augenblicke berührt wird. Omnia sacramentum*" (HOFFMANN et al., eds., vol. II, p. 34).

2 SCHELLING'S Theory of the World Soul in the *Timaios*-Manuscript (1794), in the Introduction to the *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur* (1797), in *Von der Weltseele* (¹1798, ²1806, ³1809), and in *Die Weltalter* (versions of 1811 and 1814). The Influence of KANT'S Dynamical Concept of Wärmestoff (Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft) on SCHELLING'S Idea of the World Soul

Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph SCHELLING'S (1775–1854) interest in the World Soul dates back to a very early stage in his intellectual career. As is known, the earliest sign of such an interest is his *Timaios*-manuscript (a philosophical commentary on PLATO'S *Timaios*), which he composed in the first months of 1794.³⁵ As the editor of the manuscript, H. BUCHNER writes, “Schelling was in the third year of his theological studies in Tübingen then and was no more than 18 years old.”³⁶ This fact does not reduce the philosophical interest of the *Timaios*-notes. Although the chief metaphysical topic of this text is the relationship, in PLATO, of the ideal, prototypal world to the physical world, the concept of the *Weltseele* also receives a great amount of SCHELLING'S attention here. In a metaphysical respect, he puts down the interpretive thesis that in PLATO'S cosmogony, an intelligible world (κόσμος νοητός) must be the principle of the empirical reality. This intelligible world (*ideale Welt*) is conceived by him as an ideal pre-figuration of all parts and properties of the physical world.³⁷

SCHELLING'S later speculative metaphysical doctrines, in, e.g., *Bruno* (1802) or *Über das Verhältnis des Realen und Idealen in der Natur* (1806), about the necessary bond between the Finite and the Infinite, Real (physical) and Ideal (spiritual, metaphysical), seem, to some extent, to originate from this Platonic meditation on the relationship between intelligible prototype (*Idee*) and empirical world, though

³⁵M. FRANZ points out that the *Timaios*-manuscript is one of the 23 remaining copybooks which SCHELLING filled with notes in the *Tübinger Stift* and which are kept in the archives of the Berlin–Brandenburg Academy of Sciences now (see FRANZ, 1998: “Die Natur des Geistes. Schellings Interpretation des Platonischen »Timaios« in Tübingen 1794”). Two more samples of these early texts have been published by M. FRANZ in the appendix of his monograph *Schellings Tübinger Platon-Studien* (FRANZ, 1996, pp. 283–320), as well as a philological and philosophical analysis of the *Timaios*-manuscript (pp. 237–282). A well-considered comparison of PLATO'S and SCHELLING'S respective ideas of the soul of the world is J. JOST'S dissertation *Die Bedeutung der Weltseele in der Schelling'schen Philosophie im Vergleich mit der platonischen Lehre* (see bibliography).

³⁶“Schelling stand damals im 3. Jahr seines theologischen Studiums in Tübingen und war gut 18 Jahre alt.” (BUCHNER ed., p. 14.) On SCHELLING'S studies and professors at the *Tübinger Stift*, see FUHRMANS'S summary (see bibliography).

³⁷Cf. “Der sichtbaren Welt also liegt ein κόσμος νοητός d.h. eine Welt zu Grunde, die nicht physisch existirt, wie die sichtbare, denn sonst wäre auch sie etwas Entstandnes, empirisches, durch Erfahrung erkennbares, sondern eine Welt, insofern sie in der Idee existirt (insofern sie νοητός ist). Diese ideale Welt muß alle einzelne Bestimmungen u. Teile der sichtbaren befaßen” (BUCHNER ed., p. 30, both kinds of emphasis by SCHELLING).

here he does not yet posit their interdependence or interpenetration, and higher unity in the Absolute. Next, as far as the world soul is concerned, SCHELLING, in his interpretation of PLATO, deduces the necessity of the introduction of a *Weltseele* from the circumstance that pre-existent matter by its intrinsic nature had moved irregularly even *before* the intervention of the demiurge. Therefore, the 'artisan god', in order to render the cosmic motions regular and teleological, was obliged to vest primordial matter with a *rational* internal form. Now in SCHELLING'S particular interpretative conception, primordial matter, in order to be able to move at all, had had to possess from the very beginning a universal *irrational* soul as a principle of its irregular self-generated agitation. What the demiurge then did, argues SCHELLING, was bring about the communication of *reason*, νοῦς, with the already existing, immanent *Weltseele*.³⁸ By virtue of this operation, the cosmic agitation of the universe was transformed to a regular motion, which physically imitates the perfectly regulated intellectual operation of divine reason:

Since, according to Plato, the soul of the world was originally present in matter, the word ψυχή in the expression ψυχήν δὲ ἐν σώματι τιθεῖ must refer not to the original condition of this soul but to that which has already partaken of the rational form. »He added reason to the (original) soul of the world, and the (resulting rational) soul of the world to matter etc.«³⁹

While this is certainly not the mainstream interpretation of the relevant passage of the *Timaios*, it expresses SCHELLING'S conviction that the concept of nature as such is just ab ovo unthinkable without that of an inherent (irrational or rational) soul as an internal form. The metaphysical thesis of the *Timaios*-notes that nature has had an *intrinsic* spiritual principle from the very beginning is an anticipation of the more complex but related position of the *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur* (Leipzig, 1797), where, again, the question concerning the *Zweckmäßigkeit* of nature directs the discussion towards the concept of the world soul.⁴⁰

³⁸Cf. "Insofern sich nun die Form, die Gott der Welt mitteilte, nur auf die Form der Bewegung der Welt bezog, so mußte die Welt auch ursprünglich, unabhängig von Gott ein eigenthümliches Princip der Bewegung haben, das als Princip, das der Materie angehört, aller Regel- u. Gesezmäßigkeit widersprach u. erst durch die Form (περαξ) die der göttliche Verstand ihm gab, in die Schranken der Gesezmäßigkeit gebracht wurde" (*Ibid.*, pp. 27 and 28, SCHELLING'S emphasis).

³⁹"Da nach Plato die Weltseele ursprünglich in der Materie vorhanden war, so muß in den Worten: ψυχήν δε εν σώματι τιθεις, ψυχη nicht von der ursprünglichen sondern von der schon der Verstandesform teilhaftigen Seele verstanden werden. »Er vereinigte mit der (ursprünglichen) Weltseele den Verstand, diese (nun verständige) Weltseele mit der Materie u.s.w.«" (*Ibid.*, SCHELLING'S emphasis).

⁴⁰M. FRANZ qualifies the general philosophical tendency of the *Timaios*-notes in the following manner: "Nach Schelling hat Platon bei seiner Darstellung der Weltschöpfung durch den Demiurgen nicht so sehr eine Darstellung der naturphilosophischen Elemente im Sinn, sondern spricht vielmehr im übertragenen Sinne und meint mit seiner Schilderung des Schöpfungsvorgangs eigentlich die »Ursprünge« der »Formen des Vorstellungsvermögens«. Platon liefert daher in den Augen des jungen Schelling einen Beitrag zu dem durch Reinhold nur vorläufig und unvollkommen formulierten Programm einer »Elementarphilosophie«. Was Schelling 1794 am »Timaios« interessiert, ist noch nicht der Geist der Natur, sondern vorerst und mit Recht zuerst die Natur des Geistes" (FRANZ, 1998, p. 238).

The Introduction of this text struggles with the metaphysical problem of how we *acquire* the idea of an external, teleologically operating, living nature. Thus, SCHELLING's question is *not* how we have to think speculatively-scientifically the coming-into-being of an external animated nature (whether by creation or materialistically), but what metaphysical *preconditions* have to obtain in order that we may come to possess the idea of external living nature at all.⁴¹

As an answer to this question, SCHELLING argues that unless one is an inseparable *part of* the totality of the natural world and thereby has an intuitive, immediate, '*ab intra*' understanding of the existence of nature, it is impossible to prove in any scientific manner that there is an animate external reality underlying one's idea of nature. To evade this (our absolute separation from nature), we must subordinate ourselves to the whole of living nature. Unless we consider ourselves as organic parts of nature, we necessarily experience it as a dead object.⁴²

Even when we think the concept of nature in this manner, we inevitably think of an entity that is teleologically organized. But it is a fundamental premiss of Schellingian natural philosophy that the highest results of that *organization: organism and life*, are not an attribute of pure material substance. The concept of *life* presumes that matter is, literally, *ab ovo* organized so that all organs of a specific living being are thoroughly differentiated and functionally specialized, yet perfectly cooperate to maintain the higher unit which is the organism as a whole, *totum*. This may not happen without the pre-conceived harmonization of the development of the organs. But it is, in turn, impossible to think a pre-conceived scheme without referring to intentionality, without supposing a real intellectual capacity which conceives that scheme in itself. Thus, the concept of "*organisirte Materie*" as such is unthinkable without a necessary reference to that of "*Geist*". Hence, a higher immaterial principle must be thought to be responsible for the respective unity of every living being, for the coordination of the several different actions taking place within each living body.⁴³

⁴¹Cf. "...denn wir verlangen zu wissen, nicht, wie eine solche Natur außer uns entstanden, sondern wie auch nur die Idee einer solchen Natur in uns gekommen seye; nicht etwa nur, wie wir sie willkürlich erzeugt haben, sondern wie, und warum sie ursprünglich und nothwendig allem, was unser Geschlecht über Natur von jeher gedacht hat, zu Grunde liegt?" (AA, vol. I/5, p. 107).

⁴²Cf. "So lange ich selbst mit der Natur identisch bin, verstehe ich, was eine lebendige Natur ist, so gut, als ich mein eignes Leben verstehe; begreife, wie dieses allgemeine Leben der Natur in den mannichfaltigsten Formen, in stufenmäßigen Entwicklungen, in allmählichen Annäherungen zur Freyheit sich offenbaret; so bald ich aber mich von der Natur trenne, bleibt mir nichts übrig, als ein todes Objekt, und ich höre auf zu begreifen, wie ein Leben außer mir möglich seye" (*ibid.*, p. 100, SCHELLING's emphasis).

⁴³Cf. "...dazu gehört ein höheres Princip, das wir nicht mehr aus der Materie selbst erklären können, ein Princip, das alle einzelnen Bewegungen ordnet, zusammenfaßt und so erst aus einer Mannichfaltigkeit von Bewegungen, die unter einander übereinstimmen, sich wechselseitig produciren und reproduciren, ein Ganzes schafft und hervorbringt" (*Ibid.*, p. 101).

But SCHELLING goes even further than this. He contends that the 'spirit of nature' must operate *internally, ab intra*, in order that its informing activity may be really intimately-organically inherent in, and in no way external to, animated matter. This concept of information excludes, at least in SCHELLING'S conception, the Leibnizian theory of divine premeditation before Creation, and apparently, that of a Creation in the Christian theological sense of the word in general. To believe SCHELLING, it is impossible for the Leibnizian God to really create, in so far as God, thus conceived, will invariably remain external to living matter and cannot exert any determinative influence on its organic development from inside.⁴⁴

Here, SCHELLING anticipates, in a natural philosophical context, his later fundamental metaphysical thesis concerning the coincidence of the Ideal with the Real, the immanence of the formal principle in universal matter, which will be reinforced by his later reading of JACOBI'S *Auszug aus Jordan Bruno von Nola* (cf. Section 2 of Chapter 8). If we consider that the ideal principle, the informing Spirit of nature is termed a *soul* insofar as it is a principle of life,⁴⁵ we might recognize the doctrine of the *Weltseele* in the sum of the so far presented ideas. The concept of the world soul, conceived as an *immanent* spiritual directive-formative principle of the teleological development and operation of (organic as well as inorganic) matter, is named explicitly in one single passage of the *Ideen*. Here, SCHELLING speaks about the essential doctrines of the new philosophy of nature he is promoting, and puts them into parallel with the ancient theory of the world soul:

*Hence, this philosophy must postulate that there is a gradation of forms of life in nature. There must be life, a more restricted form of life, even in the hardly organic parts of matter. This conviction is so ancient and it has maintained itself up to our day in very different forms so firmly (in the most remote times, it was believed that an animating principle, called the soul of the world, pervades the entire universe, and the more modern age of Leibniz deemed that every plant has its own soul) that we must presume in advance that this belief flows naturally from the human mind.*⁴⁶

⁴⁴Cf. "Allein ein Wesen, in welchem der Begriff der That, der Entwurf der Ausführung vorangeht, kann nicht hervorbringen, kann nur Materie, die schon da ist, formen, bilden, kann der Materie nur von außen das Gepräge des Verstandes und der Zweckmäßigkeit aufdrücken, was er hervorbringt, ist nicht in sich selbst, sondern nur in Bezug auf den Verstand des Künstlers, nicht ursprünglich und nothwendig, sondern zufälliger Weise zweckmäßig. ... hier ist die Frage, wie das Wirkliche, und mit ihm erst und ungetrennt von ihm das Ideale (Zweckmäßige) entstehe?" (*Ibid.*, p. 97, SCHELLING'S emphasis).

⁴⁵"Geist, als Princip des Lebens gedacht, heißt Seele" (*Ibid.*, p. 103; SCHELLING'S emphases).

⁴⁶"Diese Philosophie muß also annehmen: es gebe eine Stufenfolge des Lebens in der Natur. Auch in der bloß organisirten Materie sey Leben; nur ein Leben eingeschränkterer Art. Diese Idee ist so alt, und hat sich bis jetzt unter den mannichfaltigsten Formen, bis auf den heutigen Tag so standhaft erhalten – (in den ältesten Zeiten schon ließ man die ganze Welt von einem belebendem Princip, Weltseele genannt, durchdrungen werden, und das spätere Zeitalter Leibnitzens gab jeder Pflanze ihre Seele) – daß man wohl zum voraus vermuthen kann, es müsse irgend ein Grund dieses Naturglaubens im menschlichen Geiste selbst liegen" (*Ibid.*, p. 99. SCHELLING'S emphasis; underlining added).

The idea of a universal gradation of life in nature may go back to ROBINET and BUFFON, while the panvitalistic thesis to the Leibnizian school. But the idea of an immanent *Weltseele* as the *general* principle of the animation of not only external but also internal 'nature', as the common 'necessary and original', i.e., organically inherent internal form which informs the individual human soul as well as universal nature, will develop into a thoroughly Schellingian theory, by which the fusion of *Geist* and *Natur*, *Ideal* and *Real* is philosophically achieved. At the very end of the Introduction to the *Ideen*, he formulates this idea in a thesis asserting the absolute identity of (human) Spirit and external Nature. Nature must be essentially identical with Spirit, inasmuch as it necessarily expresses or, better, *makes* the same universal law. Nature must be visible Spirit, Spirit must be invisible Nature ("*die Natur soll der sichtbare Geist, der Geist die unsichtbare Natur seyn*").⁴⁷

This radical metaphysical position does not come to the fore in (though it lurks in the theoretical background of) the major subject of our enquiry here, SCHELLING'S study *Von der Weltseele*,⁴⁸ albeit, otherwise, the two texts have philosophically much in common.⁴⁹ As the author says in the foreword of the first edition (Hamburg, 1798) of the *Weltseele*, this text is, if not the continuation of the *Ideen*, still dependent on it, so the readers must preferably acquaint themselves with the earlier study.⁵⁰ The book on the world soul (which contains the key term *Weltseele* only once in the main text!),⁵¹ just like the *Ideen*, displays a direct influence of Kantian natural philosophy (compare SCHELLING'S concept, in both texts, of the dynamic antagonism of forces in matter with the same doctrine in the *Dynamik*-chapter of

⁴⁷Cf. "Denn wir wollen, nicht daß die Natur mit den Gesetzen unsers Geistes zufällig (etwa durch Vermittelung eines Dritten) zusammentreffe, sondern daß sie selbst nothwendig und ursprünglich die Gesetze unsers Geistes – nicht nur ausdrücke, sondern selbst realisire, und daß sie nur in so fern Natur seye und Natur heiße, als sie dies thut. Die Natur soll der sichtbare Geist, der Geist die unsichtbare Natur seyn. Hier also, in der absoluten Identität des Geistes in uns und der Natur außer uns, muß sich das Problem, wie eine Natur außer uns möglich seye, auflösen" (*Ibid.*, p. 107, SCHELLING'S emphases).

⁴⁸An English translation of *Von der Weltseele* is being prepared by Ian Hamilton Grant. See his "Introduction to Schelling's *On the World Soul*" and the accompanying extract of the translation: F. W. J. Schelling, "On the World Soul (Extract)" in *Collapse* Vol. VI (January 2010). Visit http://www.urbanomic.com/pub_collapse6.php

⁴⁹On the historical role of the *Weltseele*-text in SCHELLING'S appointment as professor in the University of Jena, as well as on his friendship with GOETHE and on the philosophical relationship between their respective ideas, round the turn of the century, concerning the world soul and the concept of the Infinite, see E. JÄCKLE'S study "*Goethes Morphologie und Schellings Weltseele*" (see bibliography).

⁵⁰Cf. SCHELLING'S remark on the last pages of the foreword to *Von der Weltseele*: "*Diese Schrift ist nicht als Fortsetzung meiner Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur anzusehen. ... Ich muß jedoch wünschen, daß Leser und Beurtheiler dieser Abhandlung mit den Ideen, welche in jener Schrift vorgetragen sind, bekannt seyen*" (AA, vol. I/6, p. 71).

⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. 77 (first page of the main text in the AA-edition). On the impact of the Kantian metaphysical principles of natural science on SCHELLING'S *Weltseele*-text, see VIEILLARD-BARON'S informative summary, especially pp. 414–415.

KANT'S *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft*, 1786) as well as of transcendental philosophy (cf. SCHELLING'S remark, in the *Weltseele*, about the refusal of transcendental philosophy to think the interaction between mind and body).⁵² The philosophical relationship between the Introduction to the *Ideen* and the *Weltseele* seems to be that the former puts forward more directly *ideally* the thesis of the immanence of the universal spiritual form, while the latter seeks more strictly a *material* representative of the universal form in the world soul. A further difference is that *Von der Weltseele* identifies (again, to some extent in the wake of KANT'S *Naturwissenschaft*) the world soul as aether, *Äther*, combined with a 'negative', materially conceived force.

In *Von der Weltseele*, SCHELLING differentiates between an *immaterial* Universal Form and the world soul as the universal *material* informing principle. In ontological terms, this is, apparently, a *re-doubling* of reality. In this scheme, the material formal principle, itself divine insofar as it is omnipresent and incorruptible (ἄφθαρτον),⁵³ must be supposed to mirror back the (certainly even more divine) *immaterial* Universal Form. However, Schelling is very reticent on the metaphysical premisses of his natural philosophy in the *Weltseele*. There is only one passage here in which he declares his views on the *immaterial* directive principles, on account of the general teleological order of nature, asserting that the universal order of the world and the ordered character of its motions can not be explained by material principles but must be referred to eternal unchanging causes.⁵⁴

This suggests that the highest active principles of order and movement operating in material reality are themselves *not* material (but ideal and unchangeable, κατὰ ταῦτά 'Platonic' causes). This, perhaps, still does not exclude that, though intelligible in nature, they may be forms inseparably immanent in matter, as

⁵²SCHELLING says on account of the functioning of the brain that "Nach Prinzipien der Transcendental-philosophie ist davon, wie Vorstellungen auf materielle Organe, z. B. das Gehirn wirken, so wenig ein verständlicher Begriff möglich, als davon, wie umgekehrt materielle Ursachen auf eine Intelligenz einwirken. ... Die Philosophie... hat sich... von allem Empirismus losgerissen, und die Functionen der Intelligenz rein-transcendental zu betrachten angefangen. Es bleibt den Physikern nichts übrig, als hinwiederum an ihrem Theil die Functionen des animalischen Lebens rein-physiologisch zu betrachten. ... Auf diese rein-physiologische Weise suche ich die Untersuchung über thierische Sensibilität einzuschränken..." (AA, vol. I/6, p. 252; roman characters by SCHELLING.) Here it looks as if SCHELLING accepted the position of transcendental philosophy on the impossibility to think the interaction of really different, spiritual and, respectively, material substances, and drew the conclusion which the physical sciences saw themselves compelled to draw.

⁵³Cf. *ibid.*, p. 255.

⁵⁴Cf. "Nur die Möglichkeit einer allgemeinen Weltordnung kann nicht mehr aus materiellen Principien erklärt werden, weil solche Principien selbst schon eine Weltordnung voraussetzen, innerhalb welcher sie allein möglich sind. Allein innerhalb des allgemeinen Systems organisiren sich gleichsam einzelne Sphären der allgemeinen Naturkräfte, innerhalb welcher diese den Schein eben so vieler specifisch-verschiedner Materien annehmen. Nur die allgemeine Weltbewegung ist von ewigen und unveränderlichen Ursachen abhängig; veränderliche rsachen aber verrathen materielle Principien..." (*Ibid.*, p. 172, SCHELLING'S emphasis).

BRUNO conceived the *intelletto universale* to be (see Sections 1–2 of Chapter 8). But it is certain, at any rate, that they are not to be identified with the *material* universal formal principle, the *Weltseele*, aether combined with a secondary, restrictive principle. On the materiality of the soul of the world, SCHELLING argues as follows, toward the end of *Von der Weltseele*, on account of his theory of life:

The essence of life consists not in one specific force but in a free 'sport' of forces, which is continuously instigated and maintained by some external influence.

The necessary condition of life is the general forces of nature which participate in this 'sport' of forces. The contingent element, which keeps this play going by its influence, must be some particular, i.e., material principle.

Organic character and life do not refer to any real thing at all that exists by itself, but they only express a specific form of being, something which is common to and derives from several cooperating causes. Hence, the principle of life brings forth only a specific form of being and is not the cause of being itself (because such a cause is absolutely unthinkable).⁵⁵

That the universal efficient cause of life operates as an '*ab extra* influence' ('*ein äußerer Einfluß*') does not mean here that it is substantially extrinsic to matter. It is, as we learn from the second paragraph of our citation, a fully material principle (unlike the highest unchangeable causes mentioned above). So, it cannot be completely external to matter, which it thoroughly pervades. This universal *material* formative principle operates *ab extra* in the sense that it is not itself to be regarded as a factor *participating in* the continuous, dialectic 'sport of forces', which is the essence of life. It is, however, the positive directive principle that entertains the see-saw struggle the antagonistic negative forces fight among themselves. Again, it is not contingent ('*zufällig*') in the sense of 'dependent' or 'potential but not actual' – on the contrary, it is the only material principle which is continually and efficaciously *per se in actu*. Its 'contingency' in the Schellingian vocabulary refers to its freely determinative character: it embodies the *unpredictable*, it determines the course of natural events as a sovereign autonomous immanent efficient and formal cause. On the other hand, the 'negative' forces immediately implicated in the production of the events of nature are 'necessary' ('*nothwendig*') in the sense of 'determined and unfree' – their never-at-rest movement is caused by the operation of the elastic all-pervasive aether, which is the positive principle of the *Weltseele*.

⁵⁵“Das Wesen des Lebens *aber besteht überhaupt nicht in einer Kraft, sondern in einem freyen Spiel von Kräften, das durch irgend einen äußern Einfluß continüirlich unterhalten wird. Das Nothwendige im Leben sind die allgemeinen Naturkräfte, die dabey im Spiel sind; das Zufällige, das durch seinen Einfluß dieses Spiel unterhält, muß ein besonders, d.h. mit andern Worten, ein materielles Princip seyn. Organisation und Leben drücken überhaupt nichts an sich Bestehendes, sondern nur eine bestimmte Form des Seyns, ein Gemeinsames aus mehrern zusammenwirkenden Ursachen aus. Das Princip des Lebens ist also nur die Ursache einer bestimmten Form des Seyns, nicht die Ursache des Seyns selbst, (denn eine solche ist gar nicht zu denken)*” (*Ibid.*, p. 254. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, emphasis by SCHELLING).

While the concept of the *material* formative principle thus may be rendered logically more or less coherent, a major difficulty is caused in the cited passage by SCHELLING'S last, parenthetical statement concerning the absolute unthinkability of a general cause of existence (“*Ursache des Seyns selbst*”). Perhaps the most immediate interpretation of this half line would be that *Seyn* as such cannot have an *extramundane* efficient cause, separate from being itself. On this interpretative hypothesis, being is, in a way, its own cause, and there is no further cause in a different (transcendent) order of reality. This would seem to be in a degree of harmony with the metaphysical thesis of the Introduction to the *Ideen*.

On another interpretation, the ‘last cause’ is too *remote* for human understanding to grasp because it is *transcendent*. This could, perhaps, be supported by what SCHELLING casually states in the chapter concerning the phenomenon of atmospheric polarity, as he argues that our empirical concepts reflect our experience which is restricted to effects occurring and observable in the sublunar sphere only. Hence, natural science will never be able to go back far enough in the chain of causes to intuit the cosmic Last Cause.⁵⁶

This is, however, still no decisive proof for the *transcendence* of the last cause in SCHELLING'S conception. BRUNO, in *De la causa* (cf. Section 1 of Chapter 8), describes in a similar tone the unknowability of the Absolute. But this in itself hardly decides the debate concerning the ontological status (transcendent or immanent?) of the Absolute in BRUNO'S metaphysics.

It is needless to repeat that our interpretative hypotheses of the *metaphysical* premisses of *Von der Weltseele* rest on scarce evidence: this text is, first and foremost, a treatise in physics, even if, as its title indicates, in ‘higher physics’, ‘*höhere Physik*’. But it is worth considering that chronologically, the *Weltseele*-text is, indeed, not far from the dialogue *Bruno*, with which it, on our first hypothesis, could metaphysically be brought into connection.

However the metaphysical foundations of SCHELLING'S natural philosophy in the *Weltseele* may be conceived, it remains, in any case, possible or even plausible that SCHELLING, perhaps somewhat desultorily, sets down *two* (a higher *immaterial* and a lower *material*) universal formative principles, neither of which is properly transcendent, in his *Weltseele*-study. The eternal and unchangeable, incorporeal forms, principles of the lower, material directive principle (the world soul), are, in this scheme, the ‘forms of forms’, *formae formarum*. These seem to be, in a Brunonian manner, *intelligible* but not *transcendent*. The Platonic prototypes of the *Timaios*-commentary may thus have come to be ultimately inherent in matter here,

⁵⁶“Die Fülle von Kraft, die in den Tiefen des Universums immer neu erzeugt, in einzelnen Strömen sich vom Mittelpunkt gegen den Umkreis des Weltsystems ergießt, einzig und allein nach demjenigen schätzen wollen, was wir durch einseitige Versuche aus unserer Atmosphäre entwickeln, verräth die Dürftigkeit der Begriffe, die von den einzelnen, in einem kleinen Kreise nur beobachteten Wirkungen, zu der Größe der letzten Ursache sich zu erheben unfähig sind.” (*Ibid.*, p. 155, underlining added)

by the interposition and mediation of a secondary, material principle of form, the *Weltseele*.

But we still have to see about the more precise natural philosophical characterization of the world soul itself. In this respect, it appears to us that KANT's chemical concept of *Wärmestoff* in the *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft* is a good point of departure for our interpretation. SCHELLING explicitly refers to this book several times throughout his text.

KANT, at the end of his long chapter on dynamics, discusses the difference between *mechanical* and *chemical* interaction among physical bodies, and offers a long analysis of the concept of chemical solution, *Auflösung*. It appears that his theory of *absolute* solution, chemical interpenetration ("*chemische Durchdringung*", "*Intussusception*"), is the theoretical ground on which SCHELLING's conception of *Äther* (the positive principle of the *Weltseele*) as a universal solvent, '*allgemeines Auflösungsmitel aller Materie*', is based. An absolute solution is a perfect mixture of two liquids, in which the two constituents fill out exactly one and the same space by interpenetration.⁵⁷ For KANT, an example of perfect chemical interpenetration is the way in which elastic, i.e., expansive heat matter (*Wärmestoff*, *Materie der Wärme*), intimately penetrates ('*ist innigst vereinigt mit*') the air and the physical bodies.⁵⁸ SCHELLING forges his theory of the positive constituent (*Äther*)⁵⁹ of the material principle of the universal internal form (*Weltseele*) essentially from these elements, as he argues at the end of part one of *Von der Weltseele* that:

⁵⁷Cf. KANT's description of *absolute Auflösung*, chemical interpenetration, as opposed to mechanical penetration, in the *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft*: "Wenn aber zwei Materien und zwar jede derselben ganz einen und denselben Raum erfüllen, so durchdringen sie einander. Also würde eine vollkommene chemische Auflösung eine Durchdringung der Materien sein, welche dennoch von der mechanischen gänzlich unterschieden wäre, indem bei der letzten gedacht wird, daß bei der größern Annäherung bewegter Materien die repulsive Kraft der einen die der andern gänzlich überwiegen und eine oder beide ihre Ausdehnung auf nichts bringen können; da hingegen hier die Ausdehnung bleibt, nur daß die Materien nicht außer einander, sondern in einander, d. i. durch Intussusception (wie man es zu nennen pflegt), zusammen einen der Summe ihrer Dichtigkeit gemäßen Raum einnehmen" (AK, vol. IV, pp. 530–531; KANT's emphasis).

⁵⁸On the penetration of air by heat matter, cf. "So hat die Luft eine abgeleitete Elasticität vermittelt der Materie der Wärme, welche mit ihr innigst vereinigt ist, und deren Elasticität vielleicht ursprünglich ist." (*Ibid.*, p. 530.) On the penetration of physical bodies by heat matter, cf. "Diese chemische Durchdringung könnte auch selbst da angetroffen werden, wo die eine beider Materien durch die andere eben nicht zertrennt und im buchstäblichen Sinne aufgelöst wird, so wie etwa der Wärmestoff die Körper durchdringt, da, wenn er sich nur in leere Zwischenräume derselben vertheilt, die feste Substanz selbst kalt bleiben würde, weil diese nichts von ihr einnehmen könnte" (*Ibid.*, p. 532).

⁵⁹As far as terminological similarities between KANT and SCHELLING are concerned, it may be pointed out that KANT identified heat matter with *aether* already in the 1755 meditations *De igne* (section II, prop. viii; see § 64, footnote). It seems reasonable to postulate that the same identification takes place also in the *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft* (see the way in which KANT uses the term *Äther*; *ibid.*, p. 534).

It is impossible to think of any dynamic relationship in the world at all without assuming that all matter has originally been homogeneous. Hence, we necessarily consider the positive material (aether), which manifests itself in light and heat, as the universal solvent of all matter. If primordial matter, before it was transformed into the several different materials, had been spread out evenly in universal space and dissolved in aether (as the universal solvent), then all matter must have been pervaded by aether originally, in the same manner as we must suppose that in every perfect chemical solution of several materials by one common solvent, a mutual penetration takes place, in so far as a solution is perfect only if it is through and through homogeneous, i.e. – as it has been proved by Kant – , if there is not any, even infinitely small particle of matter in it which is not a compound of the solvent and the body to be solved.⁶⁰

Here, the Kantian origin of SCHELLING'S idea of *Aether* as a universal solvent is clearly seen. But the grand novelty, the Romantic surplus, is the identification of omnipresent, elastic aether, this *materia omniformis* (ἄμορφον),⁶¹ with the positive principle of the 'common soul of nature'⁶² in SCHELLING'S theory. BAADER similarly conceives of *Wärmestoff* as a universal solving material, which he calls, literally in the same way, a *menstruum universale*, and identifies it with the soul of the world (see Section 1 of Chapter 9). For SCHELLING, at the moment of the genesis of the universe, the material of the world had first been perfectly (uniformly) dissolved in the positive principle of the world soul, and then the individual bodies were gradually formed by way of precipitation (the Kantian chemical term would be '*Scheidung*') from the primordial solution. This is the cosmogonical role of the *Weltseele*.

In a cosmological respect, the *Weltseele* is, first and foremost, the active principle that connects inorganic nature with organic nature into a unity, and entertains, much like BAADER'S *Wärmestoff*, the unbroken, antagonistic but regulated operation of the natural dynamic forces. It is by virtue of the world soul that the

⁶⁰“*Es läßt sich in der Welt überhaupt kein dynamischer Zusammenhang denken, ohne daß man eine ursprüngliche Homogenität aller Materie annehme. Wir sind genöthigt, die positive Materie (≙Äther), die sich im Licht und der Wärme offenbart, als das allgemeine Auflösungsmittel aller Materie anzusehen. Wenn nun der grobe Stoff, ehe er in einzelne Materien übergieng, durch den Weltraum gleichförmig verbreitet, und im Aether (als dem menstruum universale) aufgelöst war, so mußte alle Materie in ihm ursprünglich durchdringen, so wie man in jeder vollkommenen Solution mehrerer Materien durch ein gemeinschaftliches Mittel eine wechselseitige Durchdringung annehmen muß, weil die Auflösung nur dann vollkommen ist, wenn sie durchaus homogen, d. h. wie Kant bewiesen hat, wenn in ihr kein unendlich kleiner Theil anzutreffen ist, der nicht aus dem Auflösungsmittel und dem aufzulösenden Körper zusammengesetzt wäre.*” (AA, vol. 6, p. 175. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, emphases by SCHELLING)

⁶¹Cf. *ibid.*, p. 255.

⁶²Cf. the last paragraph of the main text of SCHELLING'S study: “*Da nun dieses Princip die Continuität der anorganischen und der organischen Welt unterhält, und die ganze Natur zu einem allgemeinen Organismus verknüpft, so erkennen wir aufs Neue in ihm jenes Wesen, das die älteste Philosophie als die gemeinschaftliche Seele der Natur ahnend begrüßte, und das einige Physiker jener Zeit mit dem formenden, und bildenden Aether (dem Anteil der edelsten Naturen) für Eines hielten*” (*Ibid.*, p. 257; SCHELLING'S emphasis). – Note that, as we have already remarked in the main text, the term '*Weltseele*' itself figures only in the title and on page 4 of the first edition (first text page in AA) of this work of SCHELLING.

world is *one* organic dynamic whole (the *Weltseele* is the “*Princip der allgemeinen dynamischen Gemeinschaft in der Welt*”).⁶³ The soul of the world is thus the material principle of the identity and substantial unity of the world.

As regards its material constitution, SCHELLING'S world soul is a “*frey cirkulirendes, um die Weltkörper ausgegoßnes, höchstelastisches, Fluidum*”.⁶⁴ It is substantially not *one* but *composite*, insofar as it consists of a sovereign first, positive power and a second, negative force (both of them *materially* conceived). The Schellingian *Weltseele* is thus conceived, again, as matter in general within the bounds of Kantian physics: it has elasticity as well as a contractive force as its essential attributes. The positive, directive material component, the divine element, of the world soul is *Äther*, while the secondary, negative part may be ponderable ‘light matter’ (*Licht*), heat matter, electric or magnetic matter.⁶⁵ It is an essential qualification of the soul of the world, then, that its positive principle is never relieved from the restricting resistance of its negative constituent. The material composition of the world soul thus seems to reflect the duplicity Ideal-Real. These two factors are, in the somewhat later philosophy of SCHELLING, also inseparably bound together in the eternal ‘Bond’, SCHELLING'S concept of the Absolute (cf. *Über das Verhältnis des Realen und Idealen in der Natur*).

The world soul is further also the principle of life, though SCHELLING, inconsistently, speaks only about the positive component. In fact, there is some vacillation throughout the text as to whether *Weltseele* (*die allgemeine Seele der Welt*) is the positive-negative *compound* substance of the universal material principle of form, or only the positive principle of the compound. In this respect, we may point out that insofar as the *active determinative* component of the *Weltseele* is its positive principle, it may be *conceptually* (although not *really*) isolated and regarded as its essential part, and then the idea of the universal material principle of form may be applied *late* to the compound substance of the *Weltseele*, and *stricte* only to the positive principle of the *Weltseele*. It seems that in the following citation about the ‘ground of life’ (“*der Grund des Lebens*”), we meet the *stricte* interpretation of the concept as SCHELLING contends that:

Hence, the positive principle of life can not be specific to any individual being. It is spread out in the entire Creation and pervades every single being as the collective Breath of Nature. ... Therefore, the universal principle of life becomes individualized in every single living being (considered as a particular world) in proportion to the specific grade of

⁶³ AA, vol. 6, p. 94.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

⁶⁵ Cf. the introductory part of the main text: “*Diese beyden streitenden Kräfte zusammengefaßt, oder im Conflict vorgestellt, führen auf die Idee eines organisirenden, die Welt zum System bildenden, Princip. Ein solches wollten vielleicht die Alten durch die Weltseele andeuten. Die ursprünglich-positive Kraft, wenn sie unendlich wäre, fiel ganz außerhalb aller Schranken möglicher Wahrnehmung. Durch die entgegengesetzte beschränkt, wird sie eine endliche Größe – sie fängt an Object der Wahrnehmung zu seyn, oder sie offenbahrt sich in Erscheinungen.*” (*Ibid.*, p. 77; SCHELLING'S emphases.)

*sensibility of that particular being. The entire diversity of life in the entire Creation derives from the identity of the positive principle in all beings and from the difference of the negative principle in the individuals...*⁶⁶

The world soul (conceived *stricto* as its positive principle, *Äther*) is, in this characteristically early German Romantic natural philosophical statement, described as the 'common breath of nature', which is spread out in the entire Creation and pervades each creature. Each individual living being is thus a dependent member of an indefinitely extended, animate whole (*totum integrum*), to which it is physically subordinated. The organic system of nature as a whole is maintained in life by the soul of the world, which intrinsically operates in the individual creatures.⁶⁷ While it is a general early German Romantic idea that God is immediately present and perceivable in nature (see, e.g., Ph. O. RUNGE's hymnic exclamation in his letter to his brother, of 9 March 1802),⁶⁸ the young SCHELLING's scientifically demonstrated conviction in *Von der Weltseele* seems to be, on our preferred interpretive hypothesis, that the divine is immediately present but not transcendent. As further evidence for our hypothesis, we may refer to the idea of the 'Giant Spirit' (*Riesengeist*) of SCHELLING's poem, *Epikurisch Glaubensbekenntniss Heinz Widerporstens* (autumn 1799, anonymously published, in part, in 1800), in which the same conviction is articulated in poetic form.⁶⁹

⁶⁶"Das positive Princip des Lebens kann daher keinem Individuum eigenthümlich seyn, es ist durch die ganze Schöpfung verbreitet, und durchdringt jedes einzelne Wesen als der gemeinschaftliche Athem der Natur. ... So individualisirt sich das allgemeine Princip des Lebens in jedem einzelnen lebenden Wesen, (als in einer besondern Welt), nach dem verschiedenen Grad seiner Receptivität. Die ganze Mannichfaltigkeit des Lebens in der ganzen Schöpfung liegt in jener Einheit des positiven Princip in allen Wesen, und der Verschiedenheit des negativen Princip in einzelnen...." (*Ibid.*, pp. 192–193. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI, emphases by SCHELLING).

⁶⁷Cf. also the following comprehensive thesis at the end of the main text, before the appendix: "Das Princip des Lebens ist nicht von außen in die organische Materie (etwa durch Infusion) gekommen – (eine geistlose, doch weitverbreitete Vorstellung) – sondern umgekehrt, dieses Princip hat sich die organische Materie angebildet. So indem es in einzelnen Wesen sich individualisirte, und hinwiederum diesen ihre Individualität gab, ist es zu einem aus der Organisation selbst unerklärbaren Princip geworden, dessen Einwirkung nur als ein immer reger Trieb dem individuellen Gefühl sich offenbart" (*Ibid.*, p. 255; SCHELLING's emphases).

⁶⁸"Wenn der Himmel über mir von unzähligen Sternen wimmelt, der Wind saus't durch den weiten Raum, die Woge bricht sich brausend in der weiten Nacht, über dem Walde röthet sich der Aether, und die Sonne erleuchtet die Welt; das Thal dampft und ich werfe mich im Grase unter funkelnden Thautropfen hin, jedes Blatt und jeder Grashalm wimmelt vom Leben, die Erde lebt und regt sich unter mir, alles tönet in einen Accord zusammen, da jauchzet die Seele laut auf, und fliegt umher in dem unermeßlichen Raum um mich, es ist kein unten und kein oben mehr, keine Zeit, kein Anfang und kein Ende, ich höre und fühle den lebendigen Odem Gottes, der die Welt hält und trägt, in dem alles lebt und wirkt: hier ist das Höchste, was wir ahnen – Gott!" (RUNGE *frater* ed., p. 9; RUNGE's emphasis).

⁶⁹In this philosophical poem, a "*Riesengeist*" comes to conscience *from* nature by the intrinsic development of nature, and holds the following speech: "Ich bin der Gott der sie (the children of this god, i.e., mankind) im Busen hegt, / Der Geist, der sich in Allem bewegt. / Vom ersten Ringen dunkler Kräfte / Bis zum Erguß der ersten Lebensäfte, / Wo Kraft in Kraft, und Stoff in Stoff

As far as the *early* period of German Romanticism is concerned, the ultimate synthesis of the world soul theory seems to be SCHELLING'S *The Ages of the World* (*Die Weltalter*), in which Jewish (LURIA, HERRERA) and Christian (BÖHME, ÖTINGER) Cabbalistic, theosophical, trinitarian, mystical (Meister ECKHART, BRUNO) and natural philosophical (conception of 'Creation' as the result of a divine chemistry) ideas merge to form a speculative, systematically expounded though not always convincing theology of the divine potencies.⁷⁰

Philologically, the first thing to say about the *Weltalter* is that it is not *one* text but a group of texts written between 1811 and 1814 (perhaps 1815). It is a group of texts whose original is no longer extant: in July 1944, the allied forces' bombs hit the cellar of the Munich University Library, annihilating SCHELLING'S autographs of the *Weltalter*-text. The last man to see this treasure was Manfred SCHRÖTER. The historiography of modern philosophy has to thank him for copying, during the first years of the war, the 1811 and, respectively, 1813 versions of *Die Weltalter*. While SCHELLING *filius* published the 1814 (or 1815) *ultima manus* version in the *Sämtliche Werke* (vol. VIII, pp. 199–344), SCHRÖTER published, in 1946, the 1811 and 1813 versions, together with some of SCHELLING'S preparatory notes (*Entwürfe und Fragmente*) for his text.⁷¹

It is important to point out at once that in each version, only the first book (on Past, *Die Vergangenheit*) of the projected tripartite scheme (past-present-future) had been written and that only the last, 1814 version applies the concept of the *Weltseele*. We examine this version, contrasting it to the first elaboration (the *Urfassung* of 1811) and the *Freiheitsschrift* ('Freedom Text', 1809) when these are relevant.

SCHELLING expounds a large-scale theory of the evolution of the divine nature in *Die Weltalter*. It might even be said that the SCHELLING of these years is primarily a theologian. He is a theologian of Creation who wants to resolve, in a dialectically

verquillt, / Die erste Blüt', die erste Knospe schwillt, / Zum ersten Strahl von neu gebornem Licht, / Das durch die Nacht wie zweite Schöpfung bricht / Und aus den tausend Augen der Welt / Den Himmel so Tag wie Nacht erhellt. / Hinauf zu des Gedankens Jugendkraft, / Wodurch Natur verjüngt sich wieder schafft, / Ist Eine Kraft, Ein Pulsschlag nur, Ein Leben, / Ein Wechselspiel von Hemmen und von Streben" (FRANK & KURZ eds., p. 151).

⁷⁰The metaphysics of Bruno, the *Freiheitsschrift* and *Die Weltalter*, though it is no doubt related to the period when SCHELLING authored the *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800), is the result of a profound turn in SCHELLING'S philosophy. W. SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN describes the essence of this turn in the following manner: "Die eigentlich wesentliche und dramatische Entwicklung Schellings vollzieht sich von der Vorstellung eines als Freiheit produzierten Wissens des Ich bis zur Neufassung des Freiheitsbegriff, der nicht länger als Selbstproduktion des transzendentalen Ich begriffen wird. Werden wird als Theogonie beschrieben; die Freiheit als Trennung von der ursprünglichen Einheit. Dadurch wird der Freiheitsbegriff doppeldeutig, denn er impliziert die Entwicklung zum Bösen. Schellings intellektuelle Entwicklung verläuft von der Betonung der unbewußten, 'spinozistischen' Natur und der dazu parallel sich ereignenden Konstruktion des Bewußtseins zur 'positiven Philosophie'. Diese positive Philosophie ist konzipiert als eine Teilhabephilosophie an der Entwicklung der Theogonie..." (SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN, 1998, p. 45).

⁷¹See SCHRÖTER in the bibliography.

articulate manner, the question how the absolute freedom of God is reconcilable with the determinism of nature, once their union is posited. His answer, in short, will be a theory of the *Weltseele* as a double interface between physical Nature and spiritual world, on the one hand, and between "Creation" as such and God as the Absolute Spirit, on the other.

The author of *Die Weltalter*, a young to middle-aged man, belongs among the theologically inspired thinkers who, in universal (natural and moral) history, discover an unfolding of the *history of God*. In a metaphysical respect, SCHELLING here enlarges Spinozism by super-adding the property of intrinsically-radically antagonistic *development* to the concept of a stable, non-dynamic, unique divine substance.⁷² By virtue of this addition, it will be possible philosophically to identify an intrinsically determined evolution of God in universal history. This *historicity* of the concept of God characterizes, especially, the first elaboration of *Die Weltalter*. Another specific difference of the 1811 version is its more outspoken application of the revelational trinitological scheme (Father–Son–Holy Spirit) to the process of the automanifestation of God.⁷³

But SCHELLING'S fundamental theological conception remained essentially the same in the final elaboration as well. He conceived a 'process theology' which posits the inseparability and co-eternity of God and Nature, but strives to preserve the absolute freedom of the divine will. In this theology, the principle of the collective unity of *natura naturans* and *natura naturata* will be the world soul.

By 'process theology,' it is meant here that in SCHELLING'S conception, God, though in a sense eternal, only gradually becomes an 'existing thing,' *Seyendes*. God experiences a self-realization by virtue of the internal dialectic of the divine nature. While this general idea is already present in the *Freiheitsschrift*, *Die Weltalter*, dropping the question of the freedom of the human will, concentrates on the explanation of the internal antagonism between the expansive and restrictive divine forces or potencies. The development resulting from the interplay of these forces is God's *life*. SCHELLING'S process theology is thus the dialectic-argumentative exposition of the history of God conceived as God's eternal birth and life. Like for

⁷²W. BEIERWALTES points out that even the late SCHELLING, in the *Philosophy of Mythology*, speaks of a "God in the process of becoming," a "*werdender Gott*." Referring to Lectures XI–XII of the *Mythology*, BEIERWALTES says that "'Jehova' versteht Schelling nicht als Benennung des 'seienden,' sondern des 'beständig nur werdenden' Gottes... Das 'Sein' des Gottes ist seine zeitlose Prozessualität..." (BEIERWALTES 75, footnote).

⁷³W. SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN lays great stress on the reconstruction of the trinitological scheme in the early version of *Die Weltalter*, pointing out that: "*Nun ist Schellings Denken zu keiner Zeit frei von trinitarisch spekulativen Elementen*." (SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN 1998, pp. 45–46.) On the trinitological scheme in SCHELLING'S (late) onto-theology, W. BEIERWALTES says the following: "*Im Horizont der Spätphilosophie erscheint die Explikation der göttlichen Selbstaffirmation als der Begriff des absoluten Geistes, der sich in sich selbst trinitarisch, und damit auch die Geschichte als seine eigene trinitarisch im Zeitalter des Vaters, Sohnes und Heiligen Geistes entfaltet*" (BEIERWALTES p. 72; see also 68–69, 74 and 81).

BÖHME (cf. Section 4 of Chapter 6), theogony crosses over into cosmogony also in SCHELLING'S conception of the divine automanifestation.⁷⁴ In this conception, the world soul will play a literally pivotal philosophical role.

To see that role more clearly we must begin a metaphysical analysis of SCHELLING'S theory of God in *Die Weltalter*. At the outset of his dissertation, SCHELLING establishes a fundamental difference between *necessity* and *freedom* in the divine nature. The necessary aspect of the divine nature exhibits a further dichotomy of the two antagonistic forces of *contraction* (preservation of self-identity, *Egoität*) and *expansion* (communication or revelation of the Self). God's nature cannot be exhaustively defined by the concept of 'force,' *Kraft* alone, says SCHELLING with a prohibitive reference to Leibnizian theology. If God possesses the attribute of life, then His nature must be constituted by a free, incalculable interaction of forces because that is the essence of life.

The first beginning of the life divine will be the self-limitation or self-definition of God by virtue of the negative, "verneinende" potency of the unfree, determined aspect of God. God in this condition may be qualified as "Nichtseyendes," "not existing" (SCHELLING here relies on BÖHME'S unorthodox interpretation of "creatio ex nihilo," cf. Section 2 of Chapter 6)⁷⁵ insofar as His self-restricting potency does not allow Him to manifest Himself externally. As a positive, manifestative force opposes this limitative tendency, a movement of *pulsation* sets in, in which God – at this stage still a prey to necessity – blindly and mechanically expands and contracts Himself (cf. the theory of *expansio/contractio Dei* in philosophical Cabbala). God's eternal birth is, hence, an internal rotatory struggle of the divine forces, an eternal ebb and flow of the divine being, an alternation of 'inhalation and exhalation.'⁷⁶

⁷⁴Summarizing the Schellingian merger of theogony and cosmogony, W. SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN points to the ultimately Platonic origin and anti-Kantian tendency of this history of God as it is expounded especially in the *Freiheitsschrift* and *Die Weltalter*: "Es handelt sich allemal um eine Geschichte, um die Geschichte Gottes und seiner Schöpfung. Es ist die Geschichte von Theogonie und Kosmogonie. Schellings Philosophiegeschichte erzählt diese Geschichte des Ursprungs nach. Es ist eine Erfahrung, die im Dunklen, in undurchdringlicher Finsternis anbeginnt. ... In der kindlichen Innigkeit, in der Ahnung des Unzertrennten, lassen sich diese göttliche Offenbarungen nacherzählen... Das hört romantisch an, ist es auch. Aber es zeigt auch, wie sehr die Romantik, zumal in ihrer späten Phase, von ihren Bedingungen im christlichen Platonismus abhing – einem Platonismus, der nicht mehr mit der Transzendentalphilosophie koinzidierte, sondern als ihr Gegenpol fungierte" (SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN 2006, p. 163).

⁷⁵W. SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN points out that in *Die Weltalter*, "Schellings Terminologie ist sehr eng an Böhme, besonders »Von der Gnadenwahl«" (SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN 1998, p. 55, n. 25).

⁷⁶W. SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN applies the metaphor of systole and diastole to this process as he writes about SCHELLING'S theory of the generation of space in *Die Weltalter* that: "Die organische Materie, die sich als Raum entfaltet... lebt, indem sie sich... vielfältig nach ihren geistigen Urbildern in Abbildern entwickelt: Sie pulsiert und entfaltet die geistigen Urbilder räumlich in systolischen und diastolischen Bewegungen... ...dieses lebendige Verhältnis, in dem Idee und raum-zeitliche Verwirklichung in Systole und Diastole zugleich erscheinen, ist zugleich das Wesen des Kunstwerks." (SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN 1998, p. 51.) He applies the concept pair of expansion

But this concerns only the unfree or determined aspect of God. God by excellence is, in the traditional acceptance, absolute freedom and eternity. The absolute freedom of this aspect of God consists in the absolutely undetermined character of the divine willpower. God, as the *absoluter Geist*, is a willpower not influenced by the attraction of any particular or general objective. On an ontological level, the undetermined aspect of God is – in correlation with this – absolutely transcendent, beyond being, pure essence, the Areopagitan *ὑπερθεότης*, *Übergottheit*, the *supersesse* of negative theology.⁷⁷

The two (determined and free) aspects of God then combine in a scheme of the Absolute. In this, *being* (*Seyn*, the unfree aspect of God) is bound inseparably together with pure *essence* (*Wesen*, the free aspect of God). The emergence of the *bond* between the two aspects of God is, essentially, the act of “Creation” in SCHELLING’S theology, insofar as the determined aspect of God will be identified as the tripartite finite world, while the undetermined aspect as “God *par excellence*.” By reason of these identifications, it is reasonable to designate this process as a cosmo-theogony. In genuinely ontological terms, the addition of the divine *essence* to *being* (the finite world) thus yields *substance* (*Seyendes*, the Absolute) according to SCHELLING’S intuition.

This is an important step in SCHELLING’S disquisition. In the finite world (God’s unfree aspect), he differentiates between three constituents (*Natur–Geisterwelt–Weltseele*) that together perform the above-described mechanical pulsation of the divine nature. This use of the word “nature” is philosophically not innocent because physical nature is hereby divinized by SCHELLING as deriving from the Divine Nature and seen as one potency of the determined aspect of God.⁷⁸ A higher potency of the same Divine Nature is the spiritual universe, *Geisterwelt*, on top of which we find the world soul. God, as the absolutely free, eternal being, belongs, before the act of “Creation,” to a different order of existence, so we discover the following ontological hierarchy of the divine aspects in SCHELLING’S text:

and contraction to the first phase (that of the divine desire, *Sehnsucht*) of SCHELLING’S theogony in the *Freiheitsschrift*: “Zwischen Nichts und Existenz webt die Sehnsucht. Sehnsucht bezeichnet bei Schelling den Rand zwischen unbestimmtem und bestimmtem Einen; er sieht die vehementia essendi als lebendig pulsierend in Expansion und Kontraktion; Expansion und Kontraktion zeigen die Bewegung der Sehnsucht zur Existenz. ... Diese Sehnsucht ist auch der zentrale Impuls allen Werdens der Realität. Das ist vor Schelling nirgendwo so deutlich wie bei Böhme” (SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN 2006, p. 162).

⁷⁷“...Gott sey das Ueberwirkliche, Ueberseyende (τὸ ὑπερόν), also über Seyn und Nichtseyen Erhabene.” (SCHELLING *filius* ed., vol. VIII, p. 238.) BEIERWALTES calls this aspect of SCHELLING’S God *Über-Sein* (80–81).

⁷⁸“Ihrem Grunde nach ist die Natur aus dem Blinden, Finstern und Unaussprechlichen Gottes. Sie ist das Erste, der Anfang in dem Nothwendigen Gottes.... Die Natur ist nicht Gott; denn sie gehört nur zum Nothwendigen Gottes, da streng genommen Gott nur nach seiner Freiheit Gott heißt; und auch von diesem Nothwendigen ist sie nur ein Theil, eine Potenz...” (SCHELLING *filius* ed., vol. VIII, p. 244).

absoluter Geist the free aspect of God, God as pure spirit and pure essence, *Wesen*

Weltseele (A³)

Geisterwelt (A²) potencies, *Potenzen* of the unfree aspect of God, representing 'being'⁷⁹

Natur (A¹)

The act of "Creation" is thus an infusion of essence into being, from God as the Absolute Spirit into the lower orders of existence. This fusion results in an *interpenetration* or a substantial union. This will allow the world soul to perform two functions in the operation of the Absolute, as we have anticipated above. On the one hand, it will be the principle of unity ("*the eternal bond*") of nature and spiritual world, the animating principle of the lower cosmos, *natura naturata*. On the other hand, it is also the principle of the collective unity of the free and the unfree aspects of God, i.e., of God as the Absolute Spirit (*natura naturans*) and the lower potencies of God, the finite world. It is, hence, an instrument with which God as the Infinite immediately communicates, and through which He entertains His relationship of inseparable interpenetration with God as the Finite:

*If in that first potency, by virtue of which the Necessary Being locked Himself up in Himself and refused to manifest Himself, we recognize the first ground, i.e., Nature, and in the second, opposite potency, the Spiritual Universe, then we can not entertain any doubt as to the importance of the third potency. It is that Universal Soul which animates the entire universe and which, by virtue of its immediate connection with the Godhead, has now become prudent and self-possessed. It is the eternal Bond both between Nature and the Spiritual Universe, and between the world and God. It is the immediate and only instrument whereby God acts on Nature and the Spiritual Universe.*⁸⁰

In the metaphysical ladder connecting the lowest ontological grade, Nature, with the highest, the Absolute Spirit, the adjacent grades exert inevitable mutual influence on each other. It is only by virtue of the "creative" condescension of the Absolute Spirit that "the general soul," i.e., the world soul, can raise itself out of the mechanical, monotonous cycle of alternations it had been prey to before the cosmo-theogonical process began. In virtue of the higher divine influence, the world soul can now acquire a faculty of self-reflection and self-control ("*die durch den unmittelbaren Bezug zur Gottheit jetzt selbst besonnen und ihrer mächtig ist*"). At the same time, God as the Absolute Spirit disposes of no other

⁷⁹A¹, A² and A³ are Schelling's symbols to denote the potencies of God.

⁸⁰"*Wenn nun in jener ersten Potenz, kraft welcher das nothwendige Wesen sich selbst in sich abschloß und nach außen versagte, der erste Grund der Natur, in der zweiten, ihr entgegenstehenden die Geisterwelt erkannt {wird}, so können wir über die Bedeutung der dritten nicht wohl zweifelhaft seyn. Sie ist jene allgemeine Seele, durch die das Weltall beseelt ist, die durch den unmittelbaren Bezug zur Gottheit jetzt selbst besonnen und ihrer mächtig ist, das ewige Band sowohl zwischen Natur [als] {und} Geisterwelt als zwischen der Welt und Gott, das unmittelbare Werkzeug, durch welches Gott allein in die Natur und die Geisterwelt wirkt*" (*Ibid.*, p. 252. Translation and correction by M. VASSÁNYI).

instrument (“*Werkzeug*”) but the world soul whereby He canalizes His influence toward the lower cosmos. Hence, though the interpenetration between the determined and the free aspects of God is complete – there is only *one* substance, *one* collective unit in the entire universe – the only lower potency that comes into immediate communication with God as the Infinite is the world soul.⁸¹ The world soul is situated at the pivotal point where the Infinite fuses with the Finite; it is a *sine qua non* of the emergence of the Absolute; it is the proximate cause of “Creation” (while the primary efficient cause of the whole cosmotheogonical process is still the autonomous decision of the absolutely free divine willpower). In a chemical nomenclature, this is to say that the soul of the world is a *catalyst* in a process which produces a perfect “chemical” solution of the Finite in the Infinite and vice versa.

In respect of the lower ontological grades (*Natur* and *Geisterwelt*), the world soul is the unity, *Einheit*, of the two lower potencies. As the lowest potency, Nature, has a limitative-inactivating effect on the potency of the spiritual world, the activating-liberating influence of the soul of the world is necessary for the spiritual world to reverse this situation, emanate into and determine physical nature propitiously. Hence, Nature relates to the spiritual universe as the spiritual universe relates to the world soul, *Natur: Geisterwelt = Geisterwelt: Weltseele*. In this proportionality, an *ectypon* is connected with its archetype on both sides of the equation. The formula is abstracted from the following passage where SCHELLING discusses the *Vorbildlichkeit* (archetypal character) of the ontologically higher grades for the lower ones within the lower cosmos:

*Just as the Spiritual Universe is a model of Nature, ...so in the same manner is that Universal Soul, in turn, the immediate model of the Soul operating in the Spiritual Universe, and whatever is brought forth within this Soul is only the mirror image or the realization of what has pre-existed in the Universal Soul as a model or possibility.*⁸²

As, by virtue of God the Absolute Spirit, the world soul itself undergoes a similar instigation to extricate itself from the limitative effect of the spiritual world,⁸³ there is a constant endeavour in the lower cosmos to move upwards, towards the absolutely free aspect of God on the ontological scale. At the same time, there is the same endeavour in God as the absolutely free will, as pure essence, to move downwards and penetrate into “Creation.” This cosmic condescension of God into Nature and elevation of Nature into God is facilitated by the catalytic powers of the world soul, without which the Absolute could not emerge.

⁸¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 280.

⁸² “Wie also die Geisterwelt der Natur Vorbild, ...so ist wiederum jene allgemeine Seele das unmittelbare Vorbild der in der Geisterwelt schaffenden (Seele), und was in dieser erzeugt wird, ist nur Gegenbild oder Wirkliches von dem, was in der allgemeinen Seele als Vorbild oder mögliches lag” (*Ibid.*, p. 288. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI).

⁸³ Cf. “...indem jene allgemeine Seele gegen das Untere gezogen wird, wird sie in gleichem Verhältniß von dem Allerhöchsten abgezogen, mit dem sie bisher ganz eins... war” (*Ibid.*, 280).

The entire spectrum of existence is thus One Absolute in which the eternal bond between deified Nature and “naturalized” (*vernaturt*) God is the World Soul.⁸⁴ In SCHELLING’s process theology, the soul of the world is the immediate substrate (*unmittelbares Subjekt*) of God the Absolute Spirit (*das Allerhöchste*), by the instrumentality of which God can develop to the full perfection of His being:⁸⁵

Hence, that which has been the Highest Being of Eternal Nature (A³) is for God as the Absolute Spirit the Bond now which connects Him with what is subordinate to Him. Therefore, the two are..., as it were, one entity and that Universal Spirit must be considered only as the immediate substrate (or... only as the objective side of that Spirit) now.⁸⁶

In *Die Weltalter*, we can identify the philosophically most complex early German Romantic theory of the world soul. It is a theory which covers and wants to offer a solution to all aspects of our initial *problematique* concerning the real (non-eminent) presence of God in Nature, concerning the life divine, the principle of the collective unity of Nature. Further, it wants to face these metaphysical problems within the bounds of a theory that ultimately defines the relation between Finite and Infinite not as one of two absolutely incomparables, but as two relatively incomparables only. This means that although it posits the substantial interpenetration of the Finite with the Infinite, still it strives to reserve the absolute character of the freedom of the divine willpower. The interfusion of God with Nature attributes to the resulting Absolute a life determined by the interplay between freedom and necessity. In the living substance of the Absolute, the world soul occupies the position nearest to God as pure essence. It is thus the most perfect finite image of the Infinite.

3 General Conclusion

The early German Romantic quest for the existence and attributes of a soul of the world may be seen as the philosophical expression of a confrontation with, first and foremost, the problem of the presence of God, *praesentia Dei*; then with that of a life divine, *vita Dei*; with that of the principle of the collective unity of the world; and with that of the relationship between the individual subject and the organic whole of nature.

⁸⁴On the interfusion (*Verschmelzung*) of God and Nature according to *Die Weltalter*, see the following important passage: “Als diese verneinende Kraft ist Gott ein das Seyn in sich ziehendes Feuer, das also das Angezogene ganz mit sich eins macht. Bis jetzt bestand noch Zweiheit; es war Allheit und Einheit, aber beide sind jetzt selbst zu Einem Wesen verschmolzen. Das An- oder Eingeogene ist die ewige Natur (the lower cosmos), das All; das An- oder Einziehende ist Eins; das Ganze also... ist das Eins und All (εν και παν) in inniger Verbindung” (*Ibid.*, 312).

⁸⁵Cf. *ibid.*, p. 317.

⁸⁶“Was daher das höchste Seyende der ewigen Natur war (A³), ist für jenen (scil. Gott als den absoluten Geist) nun das Band seines Zusammenhangs mit dem Untergeordneten. Beide sind also... als Eins, und jene allgemeine Seele nur als das unmittelbare Subjekt (oder... nur als die objektive Seite jenes Geistes) zu betrachten” (*Ibid.*, p. 335. Transl. by M. VASSÁNYI).

Early German Romanticism was philosophically confronted with the problem of the *presence* of God essentially via the Leibnizian legacy, the theology of an extramundane God, of God seen as the necessary extramundane cause of contingent existence. Though LEIBNIZ, as we have seen at the very outset of the present study, had been, in the earliest phase of his career, favourable toward the identification of the *anima mundi* with God, he came to reject this theory on metaphysical grounds as a mature thinker on the basis that God, as the *ultima ratio rerum*, may not be implied in the concatenation of finite dependent things, and, so, He may not entertain the kind of close communion with the physical universe the 'strong' world soul theory demands. LEIBNIZ'S other major argument against this theory departed from the infinity of the world, which, to his mind, makes unthinkable the substantial unity of the world, whereby a principle of such a unity need not be posited. Though this argument seems dialectically precarious (one would expect the substantial unity of Creation to follow from the substantial unity and unicity of the Creator), the overall result of Leibnizian metaphysics in respect of the *anima mundi*-theory is that, on the one hand, God as the *ens extramundanum* is certainly not the soul of the world, and that, on the other hand, there is, in all likelihood, no soul of the world subordinate to God either, which rules out a real ('situational') presence of God, and makes immediately questionable the most fundamental early German Romantic existential experience. Thus, the Leibnizian theology of an extramundane God had to be overcome, and the intramundane presence of (a supra-sensible representative of) God, as well as the substantial unity of the world, had to be philosophically argued for. The proof of a *life* divine would then follow from the intramundaneity of God insofar as life is an attribute of (the organic part of) the *phenomenal* world.

Next, the contribution of the science of physico-theology to early German Romantic theories of the world soul is (despite its reticence on the *anima mundi*) constructive rather than neutral or destructive. Physico-theology, arguing not from the metaphysical attributes but the teleological operation of the world, sees the world as a *logical* medium by which to prove the existence of God, but not as a *real* medium of the actual presence of God. Physico-theology taught BAADER and SCHELLING the theological use of natural science but still failed to satisfy their new, Romantic metaphysical sensibility and demand, which asked for more than the logical proof of the definite existence but indefinite presence of God. The gradual decline of physico-theology at the end of the XVIIIth century is approximately contemporaneous with, or even an indicator of, the rise of early German Romantic natural science, and announces the arrival of a new, more speculative-intuitive theology.

Perhaps the most significant impact in this theological renewal came from Jewish Cabbala as transmitted by early modern Christian Cabbalistic sources. But BÖHME and ÖTINGER mediated not only Cabbalistic theosophy but also the Hermetic-alechemistic tradition to BAADER and SCHELLING, which recurred to the concept of a soul of the world. In this Cabbalistic-Hermetical tradition, the world soul is a philosophically undetermined emanation of God, which pervades and animates physical nature. Though in an unsystematic manner, BÖHME and ÖTINGER

positively applied the *Weltseele*-concept in their theologizing chemistry (alchemy) and, thereby, encouraged our authors to use it as well. A perhaps even greater contribution of theirs to early German Romantic natural science was their interpretation of the cosmogonical process as a *theogony*.⁸⁷ The young SCHELLING was eager to adopt this cosmic theological idea, which supported his vision of nature as a divinely animated whole, and which reserved an important function for the world soul as well.

Spinozism, on the other hand, was important to early German Romantic metaphysicians not because of the *anima mundi*-theory: they did not consider SPINOZA to be a representative of that theory (as, in fact, he really was not). But the striking SPINOZA-renaissance of early German Romanticism, initiated by HERDER (himself not a Romantic) is, in any case, the expression of the philosophical preference of the newer generation for an immanent theology, for a concept of God as an immanent cause, by virtue of which the real presence of God, the presence of the Infinite within the Finite became thinkable.

The theology and natural philosophy of HERDER is just as much a primary source of the early German Romantic understanding of God as that of BÖHME or ÖTINGER.⁸⁸ Though HERDER refrained from identifying God with a *Weltseele*, his conceptions of God as the universal omnipresent active force, then of the life of God, of the immediate presence of God in the natural world, emancipated and fertilized early German Romantic thought, and even unintentionally instigated it to think the world animated by an immediate divine power, a world soul – so near his concept of God comes to that of a *Weltseele*.

If we now, last but not least, refer to the positive philosophical influence BRUNO's theological immanentism, and concept of the *anima del mondo* as the universal internal form, had in the late 17th German Enlightenment and early German

⁸⁷W. BEIERWALTES also sees SCHELLING's theology – in the *Weltalter* as well as in the late 'positive' philosophy – as a *theogony*: "*Diese Schellingsche Konzeption des trinitarisch bewegten Geistes, der für den trinitarischen Gott steht, führt, ähnlich wie im Substanzbegriff, die Intention der Hegelschen 'Logik' fort und vollendet sie als Modell der Geschichte immanenten 'theologischen' oder 'theogonischen' Struktur*" (BEIERWALTES, p. 74, see also 68).

⁸⁸Cf. how W. SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN evaluates the influence which HERDER's theological and natural philosophical thought, and his interpretation of Spinozism, exerted on especially GOETHE and SCHELLING: "*Die pantheistischen Vorstellungen, die Jacobi unerträglich schienen, mochte Herder wohl ertragen. Er hatte in seiner neu entwickelten Natur- und Geschichtsphilosophie, »Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit«, die Voraussetzungen für die Integration pantheistischer Gedanken in seine Philosophie geschaffen. ... Die geometrische Methode Spinozas wurde als veraltet dargestellt; als wesentlich galt die durchgeistigte, lebendige Naturvorstellung. Herder schuf mit dieser Interpretation... das Spinoza-Bild, das das ganze 19. Jahrhundert beherrschte. ... Die Wirkung von Herders Naturphilosophie dürfte wegen des Einflusses, den sie auf Goethe und auf die Romantik hatte, nicht leicht zu überschätzen sein. ... Der Naturbegriff, den Herder mit seiner Spinoza-Interpretation einer mystischen Tradition angenähert hatte, und den Goethe in die Dichtung integrierte, beeinflusste maßgeblich die romantische Naturphilosophie. So verstand Schelling seine Naturphilosophie in der mystischen Tradition Jacob Böhmes und Spinozas und verteidigte diese Interpretation erbittert gegen Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi...*" (SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN 1977, pp. 18–19).

Romanticism, then we have enumerated all the important spiritual sources of the two theories of a world soul we have examined in detail in Part 4. BAADER'S and SCHELLING'S respective conceptions of the *Weltseele*, in sum, are a philosophical protest against the theology of the *ens extramundanum*, even in its Kantian (pre-critical as well as transcendental) version.⁸⁹ Their concept of the soul of the world (this material representative of God), articulated with the dialectical-argumentative weapons they borrowed from physico-theology, Kantian physics, philosophical Cabbala, Brunonian, and Herderian theology, resolves (if sometimes in a philosophically naive manner, yet always with great originality and intuition) the philosophical problem of thinking the immediate, real presence of God (at least by way of His material representative), the life of God, the principle of the substantial unity of the world, and the dependence of the individual subject on the organic whole of nature. To be sure, BAADER'S theory of the soul of the world, which maintains the transcendence of God and posits a world soul subordinate to God, is different in its metaphysical presuppositions from that of SCHELLING, who ultimately conceives of a scheme in which Ideal and Real, Infinite and Finite interpenetrate each other. But the world soul is, nevertheless, in both cases a material, all-pervasive and omnipresent, if imperceptible, representative of God, in which the individual human being, just like universal physical nature, is completely immersed. With this cosmic vision of the unity of Man and Nature, and of the intimate communion of the Natural and of the Divine, Finite and Infinite, we close our investigation, and thank the Reader for her or his interest and patience.

*Wenn im Unendlichen dasselbe
Sich wiederholend ewig fließt,
Das tausendfältige Gewölbe
Sich kräftig ineinander schließt,
Strömt Lebenslust aus allen Dingen,
Dem kleinsten wie dem größten Stern,
Und alles Drängen, alles Ringen
Ist ewige Ruh in Gott dem Herrn.*

(GOETHE)

– *labore finito agit auctor gratias maximas misericordissimo Deo* –

⁸⁹The decisive theoretical ground text that gives the 'critical' KANT'S reasons for his refusal to identify God with the world soul is *KdrV*, B 599–612, from which we learn that God as an ideal of pure theoretical reason may not be thought to be in a *commercium*-relationship with the world, but must invariably be thought, even in the bounds of transcendental theology, as an *ens extramundanum*.

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Here we would like to offer to the interested reader, first, a short bibliographical essay of the philosophical research that has been carried out so far into the concept of the world soul. In this first part of the bibliography, we mention only some of the more comprehensive works on our topic. The second part of the bibliography is an alphabetical list of the primary sources, and, under a separate heading, of the secondary sources cited or referred to in our text.

The two most comprehensive studies on the concept of the world soul in general are, in order of extensiveness, H.-R. SCHLETTE's book *Weltseele. Geschichte und Hermeneutik* (1993), and J. ZACHHUBER's *Weltseele*-article in the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* (2004). Both are fact-filled studies, which span the entire history of the concept from PLATO to SOLOWYEW. Professor SCHLETTE's work is a 250-page-long book with extensive bibliography, while Professor ZACHHUBER's text is a long, fact-filled lexicon article (with bibliography) in the *HWP*.

The fundamental, classic study on the ancient history of the concept of the world soul is J. MOREAU's magnificent *L'âme du monde de Platon aux Stoïciens* (1939). MOREAU treats in a brilliant style and with great philosophical sensibility PLATO, ARISTOTLE, and the Ancient Stoa. On the theory of the soul of the world in Middle Platonism and PLOTINUS, the first texts to read are perhaps P. THÉVENAZ's *L'âme du monde, le devenir et la matière chez Plutarque* (1938), and H. BLUMENTHAL's article ("Soul, World-Soul and Individual Soul in Plotinus", 1971) together with M. ATKINSON's book (*Plotinus: Ennead V.1*, a translation with a very detailed philosophical commentary; see especially the introduction to chapter 2), respectively.

On AUGUSTINE's problematic position concerning the numerical unity of all soul (cf., first and foremost, *De quantitate animae*), the essential summary is V. J. BOURKE's article on "*St. Augustine and the cosmic soul*" (1954). As far as the (affirmative) medieval reception of the world soul theory is concerned, one should consult the shorter study of Ph. DELHAYE (*Une controverse sur l'âme universelle au IX^e siècle*, 1950),¹

¹G. MATHON's article ("*Jean Scot Érigène, Chalcidius et le problème de l'âme universelle*", 1958) may also be consulted with respect to the early Middle Ages, though it is a very technical philological study on how CALCIDIUS's presentation of the *anima mundi*, in his partial Latin translation and

T. GREGORY's book (*Anima mundi. La filosofia di Guglielmo di Conches e la scuola di Chartres, sine anno*) together with I. CAIAZZO's article ("La discussione sull'Anima mundi nel secolo XII", 1993),² and L. OTT's article ("Die platonische Weltseele in der Theologie der Frühscholastik", 1965).

As concerns the Renaissance–early modern history of the concept of the world soul, there is a very good chapter on BRUNO's theory of the *anima del mondo* in P.-H. MICHEL's *The Cosmology of Giordano Bruno* (1973; see also our Section 1 of Chapter 9). S. HUTIN's book on *Henry More* (1966) also contains a useful chapter on MORE's *principium hylarchicum* (see our Section 1 of Chapter 8 as well). LEIBNIZ's rejection of the *anima mundi*-theory was discussed in a series of articles in a long philosophical debate between L. CARLIN, G. BROWN and R. ARTHUR (see these names in the bibliography, as well as our chapter on the Leibnizian–Wolffian school). KANT's refusal and S. MAIMON's acceptance of the theory is analyzed in two dissertations, respectively: that of my promoter, Professor Dr. M. MOORS (*De godsídee bij Kant. Haar bepalingsstructuur in de voorkritische en kritische transcendentiaalfilosofie*, 1986), and that of Dr. Fl. EHRENSPERGER (*Weltseele und unendlicher Verstand. Das Problem der Individualität und Subjektivität in der Philosophie Salomon Maimons*, 2006; see also our Section 2 of Chapter 9).

SCHELLING's philosophy of the *Weltseele* is (at least partially) the topic of J. JOST's dissertation (*Die Bedeutung der Weltseele in der Schelling'schen Philosophie im Vergleich mit der platonischen Lehre*, 1929, a detailed philosophical parallel between SCHELLING and PLATO), of J.-L. VIEILLARD-BARON's longer study, "*D'une Weltseele (1798) à l'autre (1806) ou du kantianisme à l'ésotérisme dans la conception schellingienne de la nature*" (1977, a wide-scope historical investigation as well as a philosophical analysis), and of E. JÄCKLE's natural philosophical article ("*Goethes Morphologie und Schellings Weltseele*", 1937; see also our 9.2 and 8.3). Both Eu. SUSINI's (*Franz von Baader et le romantisme mystique*, 1942) and J. SAUTER's (*Baader und Kant*, 1928) respective monographies consecrate separate chapters to BAADER's *Vom Wärmestoffe* (see our 9.1 as well), or at least, to his natural philosophy.

M. FICK's *Sinnenwelt und Weltseele* (1993) reviews *fin de siècle* German literature and, to some extent, philosophy, focusing on "*Psychophysik und Panpsychismus um 1900*", in her discussion of the *Weltseele*-concept. The interested reader will find the detailed bibliographical description of all these books or articles in the following bibliography.

This short bibliographical review reveals that the interpretative-historical interest in the world soul theory first awoke in the 1930s of the twentieth century when it at once reached a qualitative peak, and that since then, scientific research into the

commentary of the *Timaios*, influenced ERIUGENA (cf. *Periphyseon* I, Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis vol. CLXI, lines 1465–1488; *Patrologia Latina* vol. CXXII, 476 c–477 a).

²Cf. also B. FAES DE MOTTONI's article "*La dottrina dell'«anima mundi» nella prima metà del secolo XIII: Guglielmo d'Alvernia, «Summa Halensis», Alberto Magno*" (1981).

history of the concept has remained undiminished. The bibliography was closed in January 2010.

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