

Immortal animals, subtle bodies, or separated souls: the afterlife in Leibniz, Wolff, and their followers

Matteo Favaretti Camposampiero

To cite this article: Matteo Favaretti Camposampiero (2023) Immortal animals, subtle bodies, or separated souls: the afterlife in Leibniz, Wolff, and their followers, *Intellectual History Review*, 33:4, 651-671, DOI: [10.1080/17496977.2022.2116199](https://doi.org/10.1080/17496977.2022.2116199)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17496977.2022.2116199>



© 2022 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 22 Sep 2022.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 903



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

Immortal animals, subtle bodies, or separated souls: the afterlife in Leibniz, Wolff, and their followers

Matteo Favaretti Camposampiero 

Department of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage, Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Venice, Italy

ABSTRACT


In eighteenth-century post-Leibnizian German philosophy, the debate on immortality did not concern only the fate of the soul after death but also the fate of the body. Leibniz had famously maintained that no animal ever dies, for the soul is never entirely deprived of its living body. In spite of Bilfinger's almost isolated defense, this doctrine never became dominant, even among Leibniz's followers. Christian Wolff, long considered a mere popularizer of Leibniz's philosophy, departed from this account of immortality and replaced it with the traditional Platonic model, based on the survival of separated souls. After reconstructing Leibniz's, Wolff's, and Bilfinger's positions, this paper considers how the debate evolved within the so-called Wolffian school during the 1730s and 1740s. Both partisans and detractors of separated souls diverged from Leibniz on a crucial point: namely, they argued that another key Leibnizian doctrine, pre-established harmony, entails that the soul need not be forever united to its body. Furthermore, the cases of Johann Heinrich Winckler, Johann Gustav Reinbeck, Israel Gottlieb Canz, and even Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten show that the post-Leibnizian detractors of separated souls drew, in fact, more inspiration from the neo-Platonic and esoteric doctrine of the subtle body than from Leibniz's original immortalism.

KEYWORDS

Immortality; pre-established harmony; soul-body union

Introduction

Christian Wolff's attitude towards Leibniz's legacy is a notoriously vexed question in the history of eighteenth-century German philosophy. In reaction against the untenable traditional depiction of Wolff as merely the systematizer or popularizer of Leibniz's thought, recent scholarship has pointed to apparent differences between their metaphysical systems. In particular, scholars have stressed Wolff's more-or-less explicit hesitation to fully accept three cornerstones of Leibniz's metaphysics: monadology, idealism, and pre-established harmony. Wolff famously refrained from ascribing perception to all simple substances, claiming instead that we do not know whether the elements of material things are endowed with representational powers.¹ As a consequence, he

CONTACT Matteo Favaretti Camposampiero  matteo.favaretti@unive.it

© 2022 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way.

restored a more Cartesian, dualistic account of the ultimate structure of reality, which further led him to interpret pre-established harmony – which for Leibniz involved the denial of intersubstantial causation in general – as a philosophical hypothesis concerning, specifically, mind–body causation.²

According to this picture, Wolff's fundamental departure from Leibnizian monadology concerns the status of the lowest or “bare” monads.³ However, a further interesting difference concerns the higher monads or spirits, such as human rational souls, which are endowed with intellectual and moral faculties. This paper argues that, starting from at least the early 1720s, Wolff consistently assumed that our souls can exist entirely separated from material bodies, thus rejecting Leibniz's principle that every created simple substance is always and forever united to an organic body. Contrary to Leibnizian monads, Wolffian spirits can and do subsist entirely apart from bodies.

The theoretical context for the development and emergence of this position was provided by the doctrine of immortality. Basically, Wolff replaced Leibniz's view on death and the afterlife with the traditional Platonic model based on the survival of separated souls.⁴ This transformation also had implications for the other pillar of Leibniz's legacy: pre-established harmony. Once human death is conceived as the final separation of the soul from its body, the soul's afterlife is *eo ipso* released from the duty of harmonizing with bodily activity. Wolff's endorsement of pre-established harmony is limited to the life in this world. Although the harmonic relation between a soul and its body might have begun with the world itself, death eventually ends it.

The following sections adopt a diachronic perspective. A preliminary caveat concerns Wolff's attitude towards Leibniz as well as the Wolffians' attitude towards both Leibniz and Wolff. For those who endorsed Wolff's defense of the *libertas philosophandi* as a precondition for philosophical method, theoretical disagreements with predecessors were not unfaithful departures from orthodoxy. Rather, they expressed the only sound attitude towards philosophical authorities: never accept any past doctrine as true unless you can derive its truth from your own principles, regardless of its historical origin.⁵ Indeed, this is how Wolff described his approach to Leibniz's doctrine of pre-established harmony in the Preface to the first edition of *German Metaphysics*.⁶ Worried by the spread of the label of “Leibnizian–Wolffian philosophy”, he protested that his aim was not to systematize Leibniz's thought.⁷ In partial agreement with the various trends of eclecticism that flourished in Halle in the early eighteenth century,⁸ Wolff proposed a method of rational reconstruction for assessing philosophical systems and selecting true propositions on the basis of their possible integration with one's own system.⁹ Thus, it is no wonder that several Leibnizian ideas, in particular pre-established harmony, underwent transformations after 1716, as several authors, who felt justified by Wolff's systematic eclecticism, recast them in a variety of ways.¹⁰

Leibnizian background

Leibniz had peculiar views on life and death. Whereas traditional philosophy and common sense take the property of being alive to involve the necessity or at least the possibility of dying, Leibniz maintained that once a certain entity has been alive, it must live forever; unless a supernatural intervention puts an end to its existence. Contrary to the ordinary view, Leibniz takes life to involve the natural impossibility of

death. In the 1695 *Système nouveau de la nature et de la communication des substances*, he describes his immortalist doctrine as a consequence of his anti-Cartesian view that all animals have souls. Since souls are naturally indestructible by virtue of their simplicity, they must survive after animal death, but in what state? Not as separate souls, for this would raise theological problems, or as occupants of other animal bodies, since Leibniz deems metempsychosis absurd. Not attached to their former, now dead bodies, “since it hardly seems reasonable that souls should remain uselessly in a chaos of confused matter”.¹¹ This is “the greatest” and “most perplexing” question, and Leibniz sees only one “reasonable” solution,

namely, the conservation not only of the soul, but also of the animal itself and its organic machine, even though the destruction of its larger parts reduces it to a smallness which escapes our senses, just as it was before its birth.¹²

Thus, natural indestructibility is ascribed not only to the immaterial soul but also to the whole living being. Although the animal’s organic body is continuously transformed and may suddenly lose all of its visible outer layers, the bodily machine can never be entirely dismantled or cease to perform all of its functions. Leibniz’s argument is based on his infinitist account of natural machines and the analogy between generation and death as symmetric processes of composition and decomposition. Just as no natural, finite cause can generate life from inanimate matter, so it would require an infinite power to reduce the living to the inanimate. As natural machines are infinitely complex, their destruction would require the exhaustion of infinite parts or organs, which no natural cause has the power to effect.¹³ Thus, infinity as the hallmark of life rules out both natural generation and natural death:

It is therefore natural that an animal, having always been alive and organized . . . always remains so. And since there is no first birth or entirely new generation of an animal, it follows that there will not be any final extinction or complete death, in a strict metaphysical sense.¹⁴

Just as microscopic observations provide evidence that generation is in fact the outcome of preformation, curious phenomena like the alleged resuscitation of insects are invoked to suggest that what we call death is in fact transformation.¹⁵ In Leibniz’s world, there is no natural death of anything.¹⁶ Obviously, Leibniz does not deny that every living being is subject to a dramatic phenomenon that is usually called death; he only denies that what happens to the living being is death in the strict sense. So, what would be death in the strict sense, if it ever occurred? Leibniz’s concept of death appears to be twofold, like the corresponding concept of life. If we consider the soul or the living body alone, its life may consist in the performance of certain (vital) functions. Accordingly, we may say that a living entity dies in the strict sense if and only if it ceases to perform all its (vital) functions. Leibniz occasionally formulates his immortalism in these functional terms: “Moreover, no one can specify the true time of death, which for a long time may pass for a simple suspension of noticeable actions, and is basically never anything else in simple animals”.¹⁷ Like sleep and fainting, death (or rather, the phenomenon that we call death but is not death in the strict sense) “is not a cessation of all functions but only a suspension of certain more noticeable ones”.¹⁸

On the other hand, if we consider the whole animal as union of a soul and an organic body, its life appears to last as long as this union persists. In this perspective, death in the

strict sense would consist in the separation of the soul from its body. This may seem to apply to the human animal in particular, whose afterlife is traditionally described as the survival of a separated soul. Leibniz argues that, since there are no separated souls, there cannot be death in this sense:

there are also no completely *separated souls*, nor spirits [*Génies*] without bodies. God alone is completely detached from bodies. That is why there is never total generation nor, strictly speaking, perfect death, death consisting in the separation of the soul.¹⁹

Leibniz's account of death as mere transformation rules out genuine death as a real and final extinction of life. There is neither a "complete cessation of functions" nor "a separation of soul and body".²⁰

Although developed to solve the problem of the fate of non-human souls, Leibniz's doctrine of the persistence of animals through death is extended to account for the human afterlife as well, by virtue of the rejection of separated souls. Leibniz ranked the belief in the existence of souls that are entirely separated from matter among the "fictions" of "vulgar" philosophy and presented his own doctrine as a return to the sound views of the ancients.²¹ His enemies did the reverse: theologians, philosophers, and physicians intervened to discredit Leibniz's doctrine as an utter absurdity. Throughout the eighteenth century, Leibniz's immortalism – his so-called "banishment of death" or *exilium mortis* – was the target of harsh criticism and outright derision.²² More surprisingly, even Leibniz's partisans showed little willingness to endorse his radical views on the issue. The reactions of Christian Wolff and the so-called Wolffians are of special interest, since they point out how difficult it was to integrate the whole of Leibniz's philosophical tenets into Wolffian metaphysics. Indeed, some of the most severe critics of the *exilium mortis* were Wolffian philosophers like Friedrich Christian Baumeister.²³ On the other hand, even the few who tried to revive Leibniz's doctrine failed to give a faithful exposition of it or simply refrained from endorsing its radical consequences.

Plato versus Leibniz

Whereas some Leibnizians like Georg Bernhard Bilfinger actively engaged in the debate on Leibniz's immortalism (see below), Wolff did not even mention the issue. It is not that he was uninformed; on the contrary, the unusual claims of his former mentor were no mystery to him. In addition to the published works, Wolff had the letters that Leibniz exchanged with him from 1704 to 1716. In November 1705, Leibniz disclosed to him his idea that animals never cease to live:

I think that the whole of nature is full of organic bodies endowed with souls, that all souls are free from extinction, and that even all animals are free from extinction, for they are simply transformed by generation and death.²⁴

To my knowledge, Wolff's works contain no explicit statement on the *exilium mortis* doctrine. It is, nevertheless, possible to reconstruct his position by considering his doctrine of immortality. In spite of its Leibnizian appearance,²⁵ this doctrine reveals that, in fact, Wolff and his circle departed from Leibniz's radical immortalism as early as 1721.

In December 1721, a sophisticated demonstration of the immortality of the soul was publicly defended at the University of Halle. Its author was Wolff's right-hand man,

Ludwig Philipp Thümmig, a young professor eager to show his skills by improving a demonstration that even Plato and Leibniz had left unaccomplished. Thümmig acknowledges that Leibniz correctly pointed out that genuine immortality is not mere indestructibility but also involves the subsistence of personality or moral individuality. However, in order for the soul to subsist as a person, Leibniz deemed it sufficient to retain consciousness and memory of one's own past life, thus failing to notice a further necessary condition.²⁶ According to Thümmig, the soul is immortal only if, after the body's death, it persists in a state of distinct perceptions, without which there can be no recognition by the soul of its own identity over time.²⁷ More generally, if the soul after death fell into a state of confused or obscure perceptions, it could no longer perform its present cognitive operations, and this would be a reason to deem it mortal, since the death of a living entity consists in the final cessation of its operations and functions.²⁸

Thümmig concedes that Leibniz himself would have realized this if only he had treated the concept of immortality "in the analytic way".²⁹ Indeed, if rational souls are to be susceptible to punishment and reward in the afterlife, as Leibniz undoubtedly wants them to be, they must retain or even increase the distinctness of their thoughts. However, Leibniz also seems to admit a sort of intermediate state between this life and the eternal life of resurrection. As hinted above, he compares death (the phenomenon usually called death, not death in the strict sense) to deep sleep or fainting,³⁰ since they all are states in which perceptions are more confused than in waking life. Of course, this "state of stupor" is only a temporary condition from which both rational and non-rational souls "cannot fail to awake",³¹ but it is sufficient to make the transition not immediate. By contrast, Thümmig maintains that the soul not only remains perfectly awake through death but also immediately experiences a higher degree of perceptual distinctness, which is a consequence of the complete separation of the spiritual substance from the body.

To bolster this admission of separated souls, Thümmig draws on pre-established harmony, which Wolff's *German Metaphysics* had assumed as the only acceptable explanation for the constant agreement between the states of the soul and the states of the body.³² In private correspondence, Leibniz himself had introduced pre-established harmony to Wolff as a sort of psychophysical parallelism, by comparing soul and body with two clocks that are so finely adjusted by their maker as to "perfectly conspire with each other" in spite of their different structures and laws.³³ Impressed by Leibniz's claim that "if, absurdly, there were no bodies, everything in the souls would appear as now, and viceversa in bodies as if all the souls disappeared",³⁴ Wolff had emphasized the mutual independence of soul and body, "each one of which can exist without the other, although they belong together according to their nature and essence".³⁵ By omitting Leibniz's *per absurdum* clause, Wolff had paved the way for using pre-established harmony to affirm the possible existence of souls without bodies.

Thümmig took this path. Pre-established harmony explains that perceptions are produced by the soul's force independently from the sense organs, so that the mind has no need of the body either to perceive objects or perform its operations. Thus, the soul can continue to perceive after the body is dead.³⁶ Moreover, pre-established harmony is assumed to support the even stronger claim about distinctness. By recognizing that the soul's perceptual field is limited according to the body's position and state, this doctrine suggests that the body is not only unnecessary but also detrimental for (distinct) perceptions. In putting an end to the soul-body harmony, death also has the effect of

freeing the soul from the limitation that the necessity of harmonizing with its body involves. Once set free, the soul – far from falling asleep – starts to perceive more distinctly. Although the terminology may sound Leibnizian, the idea that death is liberation from the whole body is clearly incompatible with Leibniz’s actual doctrine; rather, it appears inspired by Plato’s *Phaedo*, which is explicitly evoked by Thümmig in this context.³⁷

Wolff on separated souls

Wolff expressed his full endorsement of Thümmig’s account of immortality first by authoring the gratulatory letter that served as preface to the *Demonstratio immortalitatis animae* and second by revising, with some conspicuous additions inspired by Thümmig, the doctrine of immortality that he had previously exposed in the so-called *German Metaphysics*.

In the gratulatory letter, Wolff avows that he had thus far merely taken for granted the crucial point developed and established by his former pupil; namely, that “the soul, free from the commerce with the body, persists in a state of distinct perceptions”.³⁸ In fact, the first edition of *German Metaphysics* (1720) did not even mention this point. Rather, it developed Leibniz’s claim that genuine immortality requires personality, that is, conscious memory of one’s own past life.³⁹ Human souls, Wolff explains in the first edition, are immortal and not merely indestructible because, contrary to animal souls, they retain their status as persons in the afterlife.⁴⁰ (Of course, Wolff might protest that the distinctness of perceptions is implicit in his picture of personal identity in terms of consciousness and memory, and it arguably is in this sense that he claims to have presupposed the point.) The second edition (1722), on the other hand, specifies that this consciousness of one’s own identity through all of one’s own past states represented by memory only obtains because the human soul after death is in a state of distinct thoughts.

What is more, the second edition of *German Metaphysics* (1722) devotes an almost entirely new paragraph to discussing “Whether the soul after death has distinct thoughts”.⁴¹ Here, Wolff rejects the analogy between death and sleep as based on the false analogy between the state of the soul united to the body and the state of the separated soul:

Those who have imagined that after the death of the body the souls sleep until they are united to it again have noticed that during sleep the sense organs are not usable. Now, since at death these organs initially become unusable in the same manner, but they soon decay as the body decomposes, so it seems plausible that after the death of the body the soul should fall into such a state as it has in sleep; in which case it would get into the state of obscure thoughts.⁴²

For both Thümmig and Wolff, death is the final cessation of all physiological functions and is followed by the complete decomposition of the body’s structure, which eventually ceases to exist.⁴³ Thus, Leibniz’s ascription of indestructibility to natural machines is tacitly disavowed together with his claim that even rational souls are always united to some organic body.⁴⁴ In this regard, Wolff’s rational psychology diverges from Leibniz’s monadology. Note that, in 1723, Wolff’s account of the fate of the organic body in terms

of transformations and final decomposition even faces the allegation by his chief enemy, Joachim Lange, of undermining the belief in the resurrection of the body.⁴⁵ Wolff's reply to this allegation is somewhat evasive: he claims to have pointed out that the numerical identity of the body "does not require the same quantity of matter", for the same body "persists by virtue of its own structure, which harmonizes with the soul",⁴⁶ which seems to refer only to the transformations of the living body, not to the decomposition of the dead body. Presumably, Wolff's point is that the separation of the soul from its body does not rule out the possibility of its future union with a resurrected body, such as described by Christian eschatology, for there is no need for material continuity between the dead body and the resurrected one. If suitably structured, the materially new body will be numerically the same as the old one.

As for Leibniz's analogy between generation and death, Wolff adjusts it to his own account. Since the soul-body union pre-exists generation but ceases at death, then death cannot be simply the reverse of generation.⁴⁷ Still, he deems both events similar in the way they affect the cognitive state of the soul. If generation elevates the soul to more distinct perceptions, death must do the same. In Wolff's view, the soul's final loss of the body marks an immediate progress to higher perfection.⁴⁸ Birth and death are steps in the unidirectional elevation of the soul from prenatal confusion to fully distinct thoughts in the afterlife.

As usual, Wolff shows concern about the theological respectability of his doctrine. In a sequel to *German Metaphysics*, he dismisses some alleged consequences by claiming that, although such a greater distinctness certainly makes the soul more perfect, this is to be understood only in terms of essential – not moral – perfection, and is therefore compatible with the doctrine of damnation.⁴⁹ Both the blessed and the damned experience more distinct perceptions, which increase the pleasure of the former and the suffering of the latter.

In the wake of Thümmig, the second edition of *German Metaphysics* even advances an argument from the denial of physical influx to reinforce the claim that the souls of both humans and animals do not perish when their bodies cease to exist:

Indeed, the soul cannot be annihilated by the fact that the parts of matter that compose the body separate from one other: *especially as it is well known that not even the smallest particle of the matter, among those that separate from one another, is annihilated, and that the body does not contribute anything at all to the operations of the soul* (§761, 763).⁵⁰

The paragraphs Wolff refers to (§§761ff.) contain his rejection of any causal interaction between soul and body. Thus, the passage suggests that pre-established harmony is better equipped than physical influx to account for the survival of separated souls. This point is made explicit in Wolff's sequel to *German Metaphysics*, which expressly opposes pre-established harmony and occasionalism to physical influx:

In the common system of influx it seems difficult to conceive that the soul after death will not fall into sleep, since it cannot act as though its force had been previously determined to act by the body. But in the other two systems, one sees that the soul has no need of the body but can have its own thoughts even without it. Thus, they are more favorable than the common system to the immortality of the soul.⁵¹

This assessment of the three systems according to their respective aptitude for grounding immortality has a paradoxical effect: it makes it appear that the view that death involves a

temporary sleep-like state – precisely Leibniz’s view! – is a consequence of conceiving the relation between soul and body in terms of physical influx. Whether deliberately or not, Wolff suggests here the possibility of rejecting Leibniz’s doctrine of death in the name of Leibniz’s pre-established harmony. In spite of some initial opposition from the most orthodox Leibnizian of the 1720s (see the next section), this move inaugurated what later became the dominant trend among the Wolffians (see below).

A challenging question is whether it was possible for Wolff to interpret Leibniz’s position as fundamentally congruent with his own. If Wolff had some hint about Leibniz’s deepest metaphysics with its distinctive view that the ultimate constituents of all of reality are soul-like substances or monads, why could he not think that Leibniz’s doctrine agreed with his own countenancing the possibility of separate souls? But if this were the case, then he should have taken Leibnizian monads to count as separate souls already in this life and not only in the afterlife. If souls were to enjoy separate existence simply because bodies are phenomena that, in the final analysis, result from monads, then death would make no difference at all; which strongly suggests that the ontological issue concerning the ultimate composition of bodies is not relevant to the issue concerning the fate of the body in the afterlife. Leibniz’s metaphysics includes both the view that only monads ultimately exist and the view that monads are never without a body, and it would be misleading to play one view against the other. Significantly, when informing Wolff about his rejection of the belief in separated souls, Leibniz also disclosed his non-substantialist account of matter:

I believe that there is no created spirit that is separated from matter. At the same time, I think that the material mass is not, properly speaking, a substance but an aggregate, and that the complement of matter is added by the souls.⁵²

Here, Leibniz clearly presented these two doctrines as mutually compatible, thereby forestalling any attempt to infer the possibility of separated souls from the non-substantiality of bodies.

Bilfinger’s reaction

From the late 1720s onward, Wolff always refrained from using Thümmig’s argument from pre-established harmony to argue for the possibility of separated souls. Occasionally, he even tried to understate Thümmig’s recourse to pre-established harmony in this context.⁵³ Wolff’s concern was not that the argument might be unsound; rather, having begun to stress the hypothetical character of pre-established harmony, he deemed it unsafe to base the propositions of rational psychology concerning the immortality of the soul on a mere philosophical hypothesis.

In the meantime, the champion of pre-established harmony, Georg Bernhard Bilfinger,⁵⁴ had taken up the defense of Leibniz’s immortalism by highlighting the mutual solidarity between the two doctrines, thereby rejecting Thümmig’s attempt to turn pre-established harmony against the *exilium mortis*. Indeed, Bilfinger’s *Dilucidationes philosophicae* evokes Leibniz’s banishment of death to solve a difficulty arising from the harmonistic conception of the soul. In the wake of Wolff, Bilfinger characterizes the soul as the substance that has the power to represent the universe according to the position of its organic body.⁵⁵ But if the soul has such an essential link with its body,

how can it survive the body's death? How can it still exercise its representational power after the loss of its corporeal point of view on the world? "Remove the body, the matrix according to which the world is represented, and you will remove representation. Without representation, no spirituality, no immortality".⁵⁶

Thus, Bilfinger has to show that the representational characterization of the soul is not incompatible with immortality. The first account he proposes stresses the difference between *anima* and *spiritus*, or between the soul in its state of union to the body and the soul considered independently of the body. In the above definition, the specification "according to the position of the organic body" applies to the soul as *anima*, not to the spirit. This spiritualist solution is reminiscent of Thümmig's account of immortality, to which Bilfinger indeed refers concerning the final breakup of pre-established harmony at death.⁵⁷ Tactfully, Bilfinger presents it as the right solution to adopt "if one does not want anything corporeal to be joined to the soul after this life".⁵⁸ He adds, however, that one then has to find another factor that limits the spiritual force in the afterlife and determines the order of its perceptions, so as not to make every spirit omniscient as soon as it separates from the body. Although Bilfinger does not insist upon this drawback, his remark implies that no supporter of separated souls has yet provided an adequate explanation of the issue. Moreover, this is a good reason for advancing an alternative account of immortality, based on Leibniz's banishment of death and his maxim that "*finite spirits never lack bodies*";⁵⁹ they never cease to be souls, so that the above definition of the soul applies even to the afterlife, and the related difficulty does not arise.

Bilfinger correctly grasps the core of Leibniz's account of the afterlife in terms of the transformation of animals as opposed to the transmigration of souls. The crucial point of the transformation account is that "the soul never dresses itself in a *perfectly new* body or machine" that has "no connection at all with the previous one".⁶⁰ Nevertheless, Bilfinger acknowledges that this very point can raise several issues, so he fills a couple of pages with an impressive series of questions and answers. As most of the questions appear to be inspired by Elias Camerarius's dissertation against Leibniz's immortalism,⁶¹ we may consider Bilfinger's pages as a pro-Leibnizian reply to the difficulties raised by Camerarius.

Bilfinger adopts a three-stage approach. First, with respect to questions concerning theological articles like resurrection, he prudently maintains that they must be answered by faith and not by reason.⁶² Second, he frankly admits his ignorance concerning the details of the body's preformation and transformation:

From where does the new body come? *From the previous body*. Totally or in part? *I do not know*. Where was it hidden? *I do not know*. How was it educed? *I do not know*. What state of the old body is best for extraction? *I do not know*. How great is it? *I do not know*. What is it like? *I do not know*. ... What sort of organic is it, which eludes the force of fire, if you burn away a butterfly or a fly? *I really do not know* these things and many others *specifically* and determinately. But in the general consideration, I can find no incompatibility so far.⁶³

Ignorance regarding these subjects is innocuous, claims Bilfinger, for we have no need to know "the *physical* state of the *body* after this life. It is sufficient to know the *moral* state of our *soul*".⁶⁴

Third, Bilfinger tacitly draws on Leibniz's concept of natural machines to address Camerarius's objection that, according to the transmutation account of death, the soul should simultaneously rule both the machine of the present body and that which is

supposed to evolve in the new body.⁶⁵ Leibniz taught that living bodies are machines whose parts, parts of parts, and so on, are machines as well, but this plurality of imbricated structures is nonetheless unified insofar as the parts serve the function of the whole. Bilfinger adopts precisely this holistic-functional framework. However numerous they are, the machines governed by the soul are “arranged to constitute one total machine”.⁶⁶ Thus, the present body can involve among its parts the “stamen” of the future body,⁶⁷ without the soul ruling two independent bodies at once.

Contrary to Leibniz, however, Bilfinger refrains from saying that this imbrication of natural machines goes on to infinity. Instead, he adds an empirical restriction: “Any part of the body is a machine; and the parts of parts are machines, up to the point where micro-anatomy has arrived so far”.⁶⁸ This omission of infinity, in fact, alters Bilfinger’s transformation account of death, in spite of its similarity with Leibniz’s doctrine. The difference becomes apparent with respect to the issue of identity. Bilfinger maintains that the future body is numerically distinct from the present body, even if the former is involved or preformed in the latter. Death *qua* transformation does not consist in the persistence of numerically the same body but in the birth of another body joined to the same soul. As a consequence, not even the animal remains the same:

Is it another animal that arises from transmutation? *I make a distinction.* It is the same *soul*, with respect to the substance ... It is not the same *body*, not even with respect to the substance ... *Decide now*, do you want to call it the same animal or not? In *my* opinion, the animal is transmuted; hence, it is not the same. For I would not say that a butterfly and a caterpillar are the same animal in the philosophical sense.⁶⁹

Here, Bilfinger’s express reason to deny the animal’s identity is that identity requires sortal sameness. Although this actually diverges from Leibniz’s considered view,⁷⁰ Bilfinger may have been unaware of it. However, his real concern might be precisely to avoid Leibniz’s radical conclusion that nothing ever dies. According to Bilfinger, what is immune to death is not this human or this animal, but only this soul that, together with another body, composes in the afterlife another animal: “Thus, the human, or this animal, does die: it is the animal in the general sense that does not”.⁷¹

We may conclude that Bilfinger’s version of the *exilium mortis* differs from Leibniz’s in that it stresses the non-identity between the present and the future body. Of course, after death the soul continues to represent the world according to the position of the body; not, however, of *this* body, but of another one. Furthermore, Bilfinger sees a qualitative difference between the two bodies, which he expresses by evoking the traditional opposition between the gross body and the subtle body.⁷² As the next section shows, he was not the last to do so.

Later developments

The texts considered in the previous sections date from the early and mid-1720s. From 1723 onwards, pre-established harmony fell under the Pietist attack. Joachim Lange described the harmonist system as a paradoxical hybrid of materialism and idealism.⁷³ His main targets were Wolff’s claims about the absolute mutual independence of body and soul, which he took to entail the impossibility of the soul’s moral agency over the body’s behaviour. As a consequence of this pressure and the fierce controversy that

ensued, even partisans of the Wolffian philosophy rejected pre-established harmony as either a dangerous or inconsistent hypothesis.⁷⁴ Although these developments cannot be pursued in detail here, some points can be made about how the connection between the soul-body problem and the topic of immortality reappeared during the revival of pre-established harmony in the late 1730s and early 1740s.

Whereas Leibniz's *Monadology* included the denial of death among the principles that support the account of the soul-body union in terms of pre-established harmony,⁷⁵ after Wolff and Thümmig these two doctrines were no longer perceived as intrinsically connected. On the contrary: it was possible either to take pre-established harmony to entail that the soul need not be united to any organic body to perceive the outside world,⁷⁶ or, conversely, to dismiss both pre-established harmony and the doctrine of separated souls by reviving Leibniz's idea that the soul remains always united to some imperishable material body. In the 1730s and 1740s, however, several anti-harmonist Wolffians resorted to positions that were actually hybrids of Leibnizian and Wolffian claims.

This eclectic attitude had appeared as early as 1722, when, in the *Acta Eruditorum*, Vitriarius attempted to reconcile Leibniz's account of death in terms of involution of the organic body with the Wolffian claim that death increases the distinctness of perceptions. From some scriptural episodes, the author inferred that, although death dissolves the bond between soul and body, "the soul does not immediately migrate from the body, but it still inhabits it",⁷⁷ waiting for resurrection. In 1738, Baumeister felt the need to refute this peculiar proposal.⁷⁸ Others, by contrast, advanced eclectic views that were not entirely dissimilar from it. Three cases will serve to illustrate the point.

The first case is Johann Heinrich Winckler's remarkable conversion from Wolffian to Leibnizian immortality. In his *Institutiones philosophiae wolffianae* of 1735, Winckler endorsed Thümmig's and Wolff's doctrine that separated souls enjoy purely distinct perceptions.⁷⁹ Seven years later, in a heavily revised edition of the work, he argued that the soul could not exercise its cognitive functions if totally deprived of physical organs and concluded that "the state in which the soul after this life continues to exist separated from every organic body is contrary to its essence".⁸⁰ At first sight, this may seem a return to the genuine Leibniz, but Winckler's account of the future, immortal body casts doubt on his allegiance.

In fact, Winckler's case is emblematic of the widespread post-Leibnizian tendency to formulate the view that the body is immortal in terms of conservation of the subtle body that perennially enfolds the soul and survives the death of the gross body.⁸¹ This ancient esoteric doctrine, revived by Renaissance Neo-Platonism, was still upheld in the seventeenth century by leading Cambridge Platonists like Henry More and Ralph Cudworth.⁸² In several passages, Leibniz himself presented his position in terms of the dualism of gross and subtle bodies:

I shall not enlarge here on my opinion explained elsewhere that there are no created substances wholly destitute of matter. For I hold with the ancients and according to reason that angels or intelligences, and souls separated from a gross body, always have subtle bodies, though they themselves are incorporeal.⁸³

However, Leibniz cannot be considered a genuine subtle-body theorist, as his most considered account of the immortal body was grounded on his theory of natural machines as infinitely complex organisms rather than on pre-mechanistic esoteric beliefs. The tiny

machine that, according to Leibniz, survives death differs from the macroscopic body only in size and not in its material composition or mechanical structure, whereas the traditional subtle body was taken to be essentially different from the gross body. Thus, Winckler's description of the subtle body as an indestructible corpuscle or vehicle in which the soul eternally resides appears to draw inspiration from Cudworth rather than Leibniz.⁸⁴

The second case points in the same direction. Johann Gustav Reinbeck, the German refuter of Voltaire, addresses the following difficulty: if a separated soul is totally deprived of bodily organs, then it cannot have sensations, not even of its own state. But then it cannot even think or reason, as though it had sunk into deep sleep.⁸⁵ This difficulty would be easily solved, claims Reinbeck, if only we could finally demonstrate the hypothesis of pre-established harmony.⁸⁶ Thus, Reinbeck confirms the general tendency to invoke pre-established harmony to support the possibility of separated souls.

However, considering how controversial pre-established harmony is, Reinbeck opts for a different solution. Namely, he adopts the (anti-Wolffian) view that the soul has the faculty of pure intellect, which operates without sensible images or words and is therefore completely independent of bodily organs.⁸⁷ But then he faces a further problem: sensations are nevertheless necessary to acquire the use of the intellect, so it seems that the souls of young children, who died before acquiring the use of their intellect, may never come to exercise this faculty.⁸⁸ Too early separated from their body, these human souls can only sleep forever. To avert this conclusion, Reinbeck resorts to the doctrine of the subtle body: the soul is forever united to a sort of tiny domicile, which not only links the immaterial substance to its visible body but also serves as the first organ for the cognition of the world.⁸⁹ Thus, even in the afterlife, the soul has an organic body to perform its cognitive operations. (How this doctrine should be compatible with the admission of separated souls and pure intellects remains unclear.)

The third case is Israel Gottlieb Canz, who faces the same dilemma as Reinbeck. If death strips the soul of every organ, the afterlife condition must be a state of sleep.⁹⁰ To avoid this consequence and account for the soul's perceptual activity after death, one must either resort to pre-established harmony – which Canz rejects, at least in its ordinary interpretation – or recognize that the soul-body union does not cease at death but persists forever, since the soul has a subtle body that can never be destroyed.⁹¹

Thereby all the objections collapse, most of which have been derived from the assumption that a soul without a body cannot think or be conscious after death. On the contrary! The purer and subtler is the body that follows the soul in the other life as an extract of the gross body ... the sharper are the thoughts that the soul will have of all things after death.⁹²

As Lutherans, both Canz and Reinbeck championed the so-called theological Wolffianism.⁹³ Both defended the compatibility of revealed truths with reason and the usefulness of Leibnizian and Wolffian philosophy for the study of revelation.⁹⁴ Their recourse to the subtle-body doctrine can be seen as an attempt to provide a rational basis for the Christian belief in the resurrection of the flesh, which, by contrast, was not easy to reconcile with the immortality of separated souls.

In the period under consideration, a notable exception to the trend of opposing the doctrine of pre-established harmony to Leibniz's denial of death is Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten's *Metaphysica*. A supporter of pre-established harmony, Baumgarten also

provides a correct characterization of *exilium mortis* by distinguishing between absolute and relative death.⁹⁵ The *exilium mortis* doctrine denies absolute death, namely the cessation of every harmonic correspondence between the soul and any body whatsoever. According to this doctrine, the death of animals and humans is merely relative, for it only concerns the specific body with which the soul had the closest relationship, without depriving the soul of all body. At first, it is not clear whether Baumgarten endorses this Leibnizian position or not, but his subsequent discussion of the *post mortem* state of the soul shows that he does. If the death of human beings were absolute, their immortal souls would survive as separate souls, lacking any relationship with bodies.⁹⁶ But this cannot be the case, argues Baumgarten, for, in the afterlife, a genuinely immortal soul must still represent the material universe and the bodies within it, which entails that there is one body with which it establishes a closer relationship than with others; the sort of relationship that makes that body its own:

And hence if a soul of this sort is to be called separate, this must be understood in respect of the body such as we experience to belong to humans on this earth, and the death of the human being is only the transformation of an animal.⁹⁷

Although both this transformational account of death and the rejection of separate souls are clearly reminiscent of Leibniz, one detail appears to depart from him. Baumgarten depicts the scenario of relative death as follows: when the human being dies, the soul ceases its union with the earthly body and “enters into a new interaction [*commercium*] of the same sort with another body”;⁹⁸ the soul “is again sent into the closest interaction with a new body”.⁹⁹ In the work’s second edition, this process is described in terms of a “*palingenesis* (regeneration, metempsychosis, and metempsychosis, taken more broadly)”.¹⁰⁰ Of course, Baumgarten warns not to mistake this for “crass metempsychosis” or “metempsychosis in the strict sense”, which would involve the soul’s complete oblivion of its previous life.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, the second edition points out that the new body “will be the same” as the old one, in that (as already claimed in the first edition) some of its states will be “most congruent” with the former, earthly body.¹⁰² Thus, Baumgarten affirmatively answers the question about the numerical identity between the present and the future body, which Bilfinger had answered negatively (see above). However, there seems to be a tension between Baumgarten’s effort to preserve the Leibnizian identity of the body in the afterlife and his emphasis on the lack of continuity between the old and the new body, presumably motivated by his (pietistic)¹⁰³ concern for consistency with the Christian doctrine of resurrection. The Baumgartenian future body does not develop from the present one; it is not an evolution of some previous natural machine. Rather, it is a further, additional body, whose identity with the previous one merely consists in a congruence of states. In this respect, even Baumgarten’s account is closer to the idea of a subtle body than to the original Leibnizian view.¹⁰⁴

Conclusion

While by no means exhausting the richness of the eighteenth-century German debates on immortality and the afterlife, the foregoing reconstruction improves our understanding of what was going on within the so-called Leibnizian–Wolffian tradition. Leibniz put forth a doctrine – the banishment of death, as he dubbed it – which immediately

raised both curiosity and fierce opposition. Mainly because of its theological implications, this part of his intellectual legacy proved to be especially difficult to incorporate into a systematic metaphysics of the soul such as the one that Wolff was building in his rational psychology. Thus, this episode contributes to questioning the traditional category of Leibnizian–Wolffian philosophy, in that it provides an instance of clear (though circumscribed) disagreement between Leibniz and Wolff on a key topic. More generally, it shows the varied and divergent forms of Leibniz’s reception during the Wolffian age. The impact of Leibniz’s doctrine of immortality on his followers was tremendous, but it never resulted in a plain, unproblematic, full acceptance of that doctrine.

In the final analysis, both the advocates of the subtle body and the advocates of the separated soul conceived of the visible body as a mere tegument that envelops the soul and makes its perceptions confused;¹⁰⁵ the only difference being that the former admit a further, lighter, and permanent envelope, whereas the latter admit none. Moreover, both groups were primarily concerned with making sure that death does not reduce the soul to a state of lethargy but, on the contrary, increases its cognitive distinctness. As shown above, this emphasis on the soul’s afterlife as a state of distinct thoughts was a hallmark of the Thümmig–Wolff account of death and immortality. In this regard, the Thümmig–Wolff account seems to have had a dominant position in the debate, in that it was able to influence even the rival account.

The neglect of Leibniz’s refined view is unlikely to derive from mere ignorance, given that sufficient information about his doctrine of natural machines was already available in the 1720s and 1730s. If most Leibnizians resorted, nevertheless, to the more traditional subtle-body doctrine, it might be because this appeared to be safer and less provocative, in that it did not obviously entail that there is no death. Canz confirms this hypothesis when he considers the following objection: the claim that the soul has a body even in the afterlife “is incompatible with death, which is the separation of body and soul”.¹⁰⁶ He replies that there is, in fact, a separation: “Death separates from the soul the mortal, passing, gross body ... not every body, not this subtle, fiery, effective body”.¹⁰⁷ The subtle body, he points out in an earlier work, should not be imagined as a tiny machine.¹⁰⁸

On the other hand, even the Wolffian account of death and immortality was by no means unproblematic. Ironically, the partisans of pre-established harmony and separated souls had to face the same charge made against the partisans of the immortal body: the charge of making death *qua* separation impossible. Pre-established harmony replaces the physical union between body and soul with a mere metaphysical correspondence, but if there is no real union, how can there be separation? Joachim Lange makes the point. Once the physical character of the soul–body union is denied, there is no explaining how the soul can leave its “dwelling house” (*habitaculum*); “as a consequence, there is no natural death, but *every death* is *miraculous*, or *metaphysical*, that is, a prodigy of nature”.¹⁰⁹

Even from the strictly theological point of view, the Wolffian account appeared to the most pious minds no less dangerous than Leibniz’s banishment of death. If death actually sets the soul free and restores its primal distinctness, one could infer, first, that death is not an evil and, second, that this ultimate spiritualization of the soul is a natural process in which God plays no role. A reaction against this outcome of Wolffian rationalism appears between the lines of Crusius’s account of death. Crusius maintains that a

spirit deprived of its body would not become more perfect but more imperfect, unless God intervened either to transfer that spirit to a different connection of things (that is, to a different world) or to endow it with new forces.¹¹⁰ According to Crusius, death as the separation of soul and body remains, by itself, an evil.¹¹¹

Notes

1. See, for example, Wolff, *Monitum ad Commentationem luculentam*, §13. Translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.
2. See École, “Cosmologie wolffienne”; Corr, “Christian Wolff and Leibniz”; Poser, “Zum Begriff der Monade”; Casula, “Baumgarten entre Leibniz et Wolff”; École, “Rapports de Wolff avec Leibniz”; Engfer, “Von der Leibnizschen Monadologie”; Schönfeld, “Wolff and Leibnizian Monads”; Rutherford, “Idealism Declined”; Leduc, “Sources of Wolff’s Philosophy”.
3. See Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays*, 216. Bare monads do perceive but are in a state of permanent stupor, since they never attain the clear or salient perceptions that characterize animal souls.
4. On Leibniz’s opposition to Platonic immortality, see Brown, “Soul, Body and Natural Immortality”.
5. See Wolff, *Discursus praeliminaris*, §157.
6. Wolff claims to have endorsed pre-established harmony because he was “unexpectedly and naturally” led to it by his own assumptions: Wolff, *Vernünfftige Gedancken von Gott*, Preface.
7. Wolff, “Monitum de sua philosophandi ratione”, in *Meletemata mathematico-philosophica*, sect. 1, 171.
8. See Mulsow, “Eclecticism or Skepticism?”; Whitmer, “Eclecticism”.
9. See Albrecht, *Eklektik*, 526–38.
10. On the so-called Wolffian school, see Wundt, *Die deutsche Schulphilosophie*, 199–230; Mühlpfordt, “Radikaler Wolffianismus”; Albrecht, “Wolff an den Universitäten”.
11. Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays*, 140.
12. *Ibid.*, 140–1.
13. *Ibid.*, 142.
14. *Ibid.*, 141. See Leibniz, *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*, series II, vol. 2, 236.
15. See Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays*, 141.
16. *Ibid.*, 223.
17. *Ibid.*, 141.
18. Leibniz, *Philosophical Papers and Letters*, 557.
19. Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays*, 222.
20. Leibniz to Sophie Charlotte and John Toland, in Strickland, *Leibniz and the Two Sophies*, 273.
21. Leibniz and Clarke, *Correspondence*, 52.
22. See Favaretti Camposampiero, “The Banishment of Death”.
23. See Baumeister, *De exsilio mortis Leibnitiano*.
24. Leibniz to Christian Wolff (1705), in Gerhardt, *Briefwechsel*, 44.
25. Most recent discussions insist on the Leibnizian inspiration of Wolff’s theory of immortality: see Thiel, *The Early Modern Subject*, 311–14; Neumann, “Wolffs Unsterblichkeitskonzept”; Rumore, “Wolff on Immortality”.
26. Thümmig, *Demonstratio immortalitatis*, §7. See Leibniz, *Theodicy*, §89, 171.
27. Thümmig, *Demonstratio immortalitatis*, §5. See Dyck, *Kant and Rational Psychology*, 149–50; Rumore, “Meiers Theorie der Unsterblichkeit”.
28. Thümmig, *Demonstratio immortalitatis*, §3, §5. See Wolff, *Psychologia rationalis*, §§736–7.
29. Thümmig, *Demonstratio immortalitatis*, §7.

30. See, for example, Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays*, 214; Strickland, *Leibniz and the Two Sophies*, 264, 348; Leibniz, *Die philosophischen Schriften*, vol. 3, 311.
31. See Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays*, 211. Leibniz is somewhat elusive about the duration of this afterlife state of sleep. To my knowledge, his most minimizing statement appears in the Preface of the *New Essays on Human Understanding*, 58: “I have also said already that no sleep could last forever; and in the case of rational souls it will be of even briefer duration or almost none at all”. See also Leibniz, *New Essays on Human Understanding*, 55.
32. Wolff, *Vernünfftige Gedancken von Gott*, §§760–845.
33. Leibniz to Wolff [1705], in Gerhardt, *Briefwechsel*, 43–4.
34. *Ibid.*, 44.
35. Wolff, *Vernünfftige Gedancken von Gott*, §768.
36. Thümmig, *Demonstratio immortalitatis*, §22.
37. *Ibid.*, §23.
38. Wolff, “Epistola gratulatoria”, in Thümmig, *Demonstratio immortalitatis*, unpaginated. Reprinted in Wolff, *Meletemata mathematico-philosophica*, sect. 3, 128.
39. Although this requirement did not originate with Leibniz, he deplored the habit of confusing “indestructibility with immortality”. Leibniz, *Theodicy*, §89. In the gratulatory letter, Wolff traces the denial of personal immortality back to Pythagoras and Socrates: Wolff, *Meletemata mathematico-philosophica*, sect. 3, 127.
40. See Wolff, *Vernünfftige Gedancken von Gott*, §§924–6; Dyck, “Aeneas Argument”; Dyck, *Kant and Rational Psychology*, 141–72.
41. Wolff, *Vernünfftige Gedancken von Gott*, §925.
42. *Ibid.*
43. See Thümmig, *Demonstratio immortalitatis*, §3; Wolff, *Würrkungen der Natur*, §451, §456; Wolff, “De notione morbi”, §3; Wolff, *Psychologia rationalis*, §§733–5.
44. See Favaretti Camposampiero, “Machines of Nature”. By contrast, Neumann, “Wolffs Unsterblichkeitskonzept”, 25–7, maintains that Wolff remained undecided on these issues.
45. See Lange and Wolff, *Anmerckungen über Wolffens Metaphysicam*, 72–3.
46. Lange and Wolff, *Anmerckungen über Wolffens Metaphysicam*, 73.
47. On the state of pre-existence of the soul in the organic corpuscle, see Wolff, *Psychologia rationalis*, §§ 704–9, §§727–8.
48. See Wolff, *Vernünfftige Gedancken von Gott*, §925; Wolff, *Psychologia rationalis*, §745. See also Reusch, *Systema metaphysicum*, vol. 1, §836.
49. See Wolff, *Ausführliche Anmerckungen*, §340.
50. Wolff, *Vernünfftige Gedancken von Gott*, §922 (I have italicized the passage added to the second edition).
51. Wolff, *Ausführliche Anmerckungen*, §340.
52. Leibniz to Wolff, 20 August 1705, in Gerhardt, *Briefwechsel*, 34. See also Gerhardt, *Briefwechsel*, 32: “My opinion is that there is no created spirit which is ever entirely separated from body”.
53. See Wolff’s 1728 review of Thümmig’s *Meletemata*, in Wolff, *Sämtliche Rezensionen*, vol. 4, 1780–4.
54. See Bilfinger, *De harmonia animi et corporis*.
55. Bilfinger, *Dilucidationes philosophicae*, §288. In Wolff’s metaphysics, both the essence and the nature of the soul consist in this “representative force”. See Wolff, *Vernünfftige Gedancken von Gott*, §§753–6; Wolff, *Psychologia rationalis*, §§66–7.
56. Bilfinger, *Dilucidationes philosophicae*, §365.
57. See *ibid.*
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Ibid.*, §366.
60. *Ibid.*, §369.
61. See Camerarius, “De morte in exilium”, 27–9.
62. See Liebing, *Zwischen Orthodoxie und Aufklärung*, 108–25.
63. Bilfinger, *Dilucidationes philosophicae*, §369.

64. Ibid.
65. See Camerarius, “De morte in exilium”, 28.
66. Bilfinger, *Dilucidationes philosophicae*, §369.
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid.
70. See Leibniz, *Die philosophischen Schriften*, vol. 7, 530.
71. Bilfinger, *Dilucidationes philosophicae*, §367.
72. See *ibid.*, §366.
73. See, for example, Lange, *Nova anatome*.
74. On the post-Leibnizian history of pre-established harmony, see Fabian, *Lehre von der prästabilierten Harmonie*; Casula, “Lehre von der prästabilierten Harmonie”; Watkins, “From Pre-established Harmony to Physical Influx”.
75. See Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays*, 223.
76. This is a “well-known consequence of pre-established harmony”, confirms Bilfinger, *Dilucidationes philosophicae*, §361. For further discussions of the argument, see Baumeister, *Institutiones metaphysicae*, §753; Müller, *Observationes historico-theologicae*, §11.
77. Vitriarius, “De statu animae separatae”, 394.
78. See Baumeister, *Num anima in corpore commoretur?*
79. See Winckler, *Institutiones philosophiae Wolfianae*, §1056, §1058, §§1066–7.
80. Winckler, *Institutiones philosophiae universae*, §838.
81. Müller, *Observationes historico-theologicae*, provides a list of Leibnizian subtle-body theorists along with a detailed examination of their doctrine.
82. See More, *Immortality of the Soul*, book 3, ch. 1; Cudworth, *True Intellectual System*, ch. 5, sect. 3. In the 1730s, Cudworth’s work enjoyed popularity in Germany because of Mosheim’s Latin translation: see Cudworth, *Systema intellectuale huius universi*. On Mosheim’s scholia, see Hutton, “Classicism and Baroque”.
83. Leibniz and Clarke, *Correspondence*, 51–2.
84. See Winckler, *Institutiones philosophiae universae*, §§839–42.
85. See Reinbeck, *Philosophische Gedancken*, §104. Reinbeck’s difficulty is certainly reminiscent of Bilfinger (see above).
86. See *ibid.*, §105.
87. See *ibid.*, §§106–16.
88. See *ibid.*, §§120–5.
89. See *ibid.*, §138.
90. See Canz, *Überzeugender Beweis*, §§149–50. On this work, see Blomme, “Canz über die Unsterblichkeit”.
91. See Canz, *Meditationes philosophicae*, §1125.
92. Canz, *Überzeugender Beweis*, §153, §186.
93. See Straßberger, “Johann Gustav Reinbeck”; Lorenz, “Theologischer Wolffianismus”.
94. Canz’s *Philosophiae Leibnitianae et Wolfianae usus* caused scandal among the Tübingen theologians. See Franz, “Canz, Israel Gottlieb”.
95. See Baumgarten, *Metaphysics*, §§778–9. I have checked the translation against the first and the seventh edition of the Latin text (Baumgarten, *Metaphysica*).
96. See Baumgarten, *Metaphysics*, §784.
97. *Ibid.*, §785, translation modified.
98. *Ibid.*, §778.
99. *Ibid.*, §784.
100. *Ibid.*, §784. As the editors observe, in the second edition (1743), Baumgarten “sectioned off and rewrote half of §§776–81, which now becomes section four of the rational psychology, “The immortality of the human soul” (“Notes on This Translation”, in Baumgarten, *Metaphysics*, 53). However, he also made additions to §§782–91, which became section five, “The state after death”.
101. Baumgarten, *Metaphysics*, §§784–5.

102. Ibid., §786.
103. The influence of Pietism on other aspects of Baumgarten's doctrine of immortality is highlighted by Dyck, "Between Wolffianism and Pietism", 89–93.
104. It is also worth noting that Baumgarten's assumption that numerical identity does not require material continuity or sameness bears some similarity to Wolff's claim that the numerical identity of the organized body only depends on its structure (see above).
105. Among the latter group, see Baumeister, *Elementa philosophiae recentioris*, §276. See also his description of Leibniz's position: Baumeister, *De exsilio mortis Leibnitiano*, §2.
106. Canz, *Meditationes philosophicae*, §1130.
107. Ibid.
108. Canz, *Jurisprudentia theologiae*, 549.
109. Lange, *Modesta disquisitio*, 125.
110. Crusius, *Entwurf*, 978.
111. Ibid., 981.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributor

Matteo Favaretti Camposampiero, PhD, is Associate Professor at the Department of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage of the Ca' Foscari University of Venice. His research is devoted to early modern philosophy from Descartes to Kant. His publications include two books, six co-edited volumes, and several articles on Leibniz, Wolff, their sources, and their influence. Recent journal articles: "Mereology and Mathematics: Christian Wolff's Foundational Programme", *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* (2019); "Infinite Regress: Wolff's Cosmology and the Background of the Kant's Antinomies", *Kant-Studien* (2021); "Leibniz's Appropriation of Spinoza's Argument against Mind–Body Causation", *The Leibniz Review* (2021).

ORCID

Matteo Favaretti Camposampiero  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7276-9244>

Bibliography

- Albrecht, Michael. *Eklektik: Eine Begriffsgeschichte mit Hinweisen auf die Philosophie- und Wissenschaftsgeschichte*. Stuttgart: Frommann, 1994.
- Albrecht, Michael. "Wolff an den deutschsprachigen Universitäten." In *Handbuch Christian Wolff*, edited by Robert Theis and Alexander Aichele, 427–465. Wiesbaden: Springer, 2018.
- Baumeister, Friedrich Christian. *De exsilio mortis Leibnitiano*. Görlitz: Richter, 1737. Reprinted in Baumeister, *Exercitationes academicae et scholasticae*, 94–102.
- Baumeister, Friedrich Christian. *De quaestione num anima post mortem in corpore adhuc commoretur?* Görlitz: Richter, 1738. Reprinted in Baumeister, *Exercitationes academicae et scholasticae*, 102–7.
- Baumeister, Friedrich Christian. *Elementa philosophiae recentioris*. Leipzig: Gleditsch, 1747.
- Baumeister, Friedrich Christian. *Exercitationes academicae et scholasticae*. Leipzig: Richter, 1741.
- Baumeister, Friedrich Christian. *Institutiones metaphysicae*. Wittenberg: Zimmermann, 1738.
- Baumgarten, Alexander Gottlieb. *Metaphysica*. Halle: Hemmerde, 1739. (7th ed. 1779).
- Baumgarten, Alexander Gottlieb. *Metaphysics. A Critical Translation with Kant's Elucidations, Selected Notes and Related Materials*. Translated and edited by Courtney D. Fugate and John Hymers. London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2013.

- Bilfinger, Georg Bernhard. *De harmonia animi et corporis humani, maxime praestabilita, ex mente illustris Leibnitii, commentatio hypothetica*. Frankfurt: Mezler, 1723. Reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 1984.
- Bilfinger, Georg Bernhard. *Dilucidationes philosophicae de Deo, anima humana, mundo, et generalibus rerum affectionibus*. Tübingen: Cotta, 1725. Reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 1982.
- Blomme, Henny. "Israel Gottlieb Canz über die Unsterblichkeit der Seele." *Aufklärung* 29 (2018): 51–72.
- Brown, Stuart. "Soul, Body and Natural Immortality." *The Monist* 81 (1998): 573–590. doi:10.5840/monist199881426
- Camerarius, Elias. "De morte in exilium acta." In *Bigae hypothesium Leibnitianarum, quarum prima est de peste certo avertenda altera de morte in exilium acta (du bannissement de la mort) modestam pensationem*, 21–32. Tübingen: Sigmund, 1721.
- Canz, Israel Gottlieb. *Jurisprudentia theologiae seu de civitate Dei ex mente Leibnitii Monadol.* § 87 seq. S.l.: s.n., 1731.
- Canz, Israel Gottlieb. *Meditationes philosophicae*. Tübingen: Cotta, 1750.
- Canz, Israel Gottlieb. *Philosophiae Leibnitianae et Wolfianae usus in theologia*. 2 vols. Frankfurt: s.n., 1728–32. Reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 2009.
- Canz, Israel Gottlieb. *Überzeugender Beweis aus der Vernunft von der Unsterblichkeit sowohl der Menschen Seelen insgemein, als besonders der Kinder-Seelen*. Tübingen: Cotta, 1741.
- Casula, Mario. "A.G. Baumgarten entre G.W. Leibniz et Chr. Wolff." *Archives de Philosophie* 42 (1979): 547–574.
- Casula, Mario. "Die Lehre von der prästabilierten Harmonie in ihrer Entwicklung von Leibniz bis A.G. Baumgarten." In *Akten des II. Internationalen Leibniz-Kongresses*, edited by Kurt Müller, Heinrich Schepers, and Wilhelm Totok, Vol. 3, 397–414. Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1975.
- Corr, Charles A. "Christian Wolff and Leibniz." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 36 (1975): 241–262. doi:10.2307/2708926
- Crusius, Christian August. *Entwurf der nothwendigen Vernunft-Wahrheiten*. Leipzig: Gleditsch, 1745.
- Cudworth, Ralph. *Systema intellectuale huius universi*. Jena: Meyer, 1733.
- Cudworth, Ralph. *The True Intellectual System of the Universe: The First Part*. London: Royston, 1678. Reprint, Stuttgart: Frommann, 1964.
- Dyck, Corey W. "Between Wolffianism and Pietism: Baumgarten's Rational Psychology." In *Baumgarten and Kant on Metaphysics*, edited by Courtney D. Fugate and John Hymers, 78–93. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Dyck, Corey W. *Kant and Rational Psychology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Dyck, Corey W. "The Aeneas Argument: Personality and Immortality in Kant's Third Paralogism." *Kant Yearbook* 2 (2010): 95–122. doi:10.1515/kantyb-2010-020105
- École, Jean. "Cosmologie wolffienne et dynamique leibnizienne: Essai sur les rapports de Wolff avec Leibniz." *Les études philosophiques* 1 (1964): 3–9.
- École, Jean. "Des rapports de Wolff avec Leibniz dans le domaine de la métaphysique." In *Beiträge zur Wirkungs- und Rezeptionsgeschichte von G.W. Leibniz*, edited by Albert Heinekamp, 88–96. Stuttgart: Steiner, 1986.
- Engfer, Hans-Jürgen. "Von der Leibnizschen Monadologie zur empirischen Psychologie Wolffs." *Il cannocchiale* 2–3 (1989): 193–215.
- Fabian, Gerd. *Die Lehre von der prästabilierten Harmonie und vom psychophysischen Parallelismus in der Leibniz-Wolffschen Schule*. Langensalza: Beyer, 1925.
- Favaretti Camposampiero, Matteo. "Machines of Nature and Machines of Art: Christian Wolff's Reception of Leibniz." *Rivista di storia della filosofia* 74 (2019): 431–452. doi:10.3280/SF2019-003002
- Favaretti Camposampiero, Matteo. "The Banishment of Death: Leibniz's Scandalous Immortalism." In *Life and Death in Early Modern Philosophy*, edited by Susan James, 64–82. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021.

- Franz, Michael. "Canz, Israel Gottlieb (1690–1753)." In *The Bloomsbury Dictionary of Eighteenth-Century German Philosophers*, edited by Heiner F. Klemme and Manfred Kuehn, 123–126. London: Bloomsbury, 2016.
- Gerhardt, Carl Immanuel, ed. *Briefwechsel zwischen Leibniz und Christian Wolff*. Halle: Schmidt, 1860.
- Hutton, Sarah. "Classicism and Baroque: A Note on Mosheim's Footnotes on Cudworth's *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*." In *Johann Lorenz Mosheim: Theologie im Spannungsfeld von Philosophie, Philologie und Geschichte (1693–1755)*, edited by Martin Mulsow, 211–227. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1997.
- Lange, Joachim. *Modesta disquisitio novi philosophiae systematis de Deo, mundo et homine*. Halle: Orphanotropheus, 1723. Reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 1987.
- Lange, Joachim. *Nova anatome, seu idea analytica systematis metaphysici wolfiani*. Frankfurt: Knoch, 1726. Reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 1990.
- Lange, Joachim, and Christian Wolff. *Anmerckungen über Christian Wolffens Metaphysicam ... Nebst beygefügter Christian Wolffens gründlicher Antwort*. Cassel: s.n., 1724. Reprinted in Wolff, *Kleine Kontroversschriften mit Joachim Lange und Johann Franz Budde*. Hildesheim: Olms, 1980.
- Leduc, Christian. "Sources of Wolff's Philosophy: Scholastics/Leibniz." In *Handbuch Christian Wolff*, edited by Robert Theis and Alexander Aichele, 35–53. Wiesbaden: Springer, 2018.
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm. *Die philosophischen Schriften*. Edited by Carl Immanuel Gerhardt. 7 vols. Berlin: Weidemann, 1875–90. Reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 1960.
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm. *New Essays on Human Understanding*. Translated and edited by Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennett. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm. *Philosophical Essays*. Translated and edited by Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989.
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm. *Philosophical Papers and Letters*. Translated and edited by Leroy E. Loemker. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1969.
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm. *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1923. ff.
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm. *Theodicy*. Translated by E. M. Huggard. La Salle, Ill: Open Court, 1985.
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm, and Samuel Clarke. *Correspondence*. Translated and edited by Roger Ariew. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2000.
- Liebing, Heinz. *Zwischen Orthodoxie und Aufklärung. Das philosophische und theologische Denken Georg Bernhard Bilfingers*. Tübingen: Mohr, 1961.
- Lorenz, Stefan. "Theologischer Wolffianismus. Das Beispiel Johann Gustav Reinbeck." In *Christian Wolff und die europäische Aufklärung*, edited by Jürgen Stolzenberg and Oliver-Pierre Rudolph, vol 5, 103–121. Hildesheim: Olms, 2010.
- More, Henry. *The Immortality of the Soul*. Edited by Alexander Jacob. Dordrecht: Nijhoff, 1987.
- Mühlpfordt, Günther. "Radikaler Wolffianismus: Zur Differenzierung und Wirkung der Wolffschen Schule ab 1735." In *Christian Wolff. 1679–1754. Interpretationen zu seiner Philosophie und deren Wirkung*, edited by Werner Schneiders, 237–253. Hamburg: Meiner, 1983.
- Müller, Georg Heinrich. *Observationes historico-theologicae de exilio mortis Leibnitiano, seu de duplici animorum corpore crassiore uno quod deponitur in morte subtili altero quod anima post mortem secum vehere dicitur*. Tübingen: Reiss, 1779.
- Mulsow, Martin. "Eclecticism or Skepticism? A Problem of the Early Enlightenment." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 58 (1997): 465–477. doi:10.1353/jhi.1997.0028
- Neumann, Hanns-Peter. "Christian Wolffs Unsterblichkeitskonzept und seine Bedeutung für den preußischen Kronprinzen Friedrich." *Aufklärung* 29 (2017): 21–33.
- Poser, Hans. "Zum Begriff der Monade bei Leibniz und Wolff." In *Akten des II. Internationalen Leibniz-Kongresses. Hannover, 17. –22. Juli 1972*, edited by Kurt Müller, Heinrich Schepers, and Wilhelm Totok, vol. 3, 383–395. Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1975.
- Reinbeck, Johann Gustav. *Philosophische Gedancken über die vernünfftige Seele und derselben Unsterblichkeit*. Frankfurt: Marteau, 1740.

- Reusch, Johann Peter. *Systema metaphysicum antiquiorum atque recentiorum*. Jena: Cröker, 1735. Reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 1990.
- Rumore, Paola. "Georg Friedrich Meiers Theorie der Unsterblichkeit der Seele im zeitgenössischen Kontext." In *Georg Friedrich Meier (1718–1777): Philosophie als "wahre Weltweisheit"*, edited by Frank Grunert and Gideon Stiening, 163–186. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015.
- Rumore, Paola. "Wolff on the Immortality of the Soul." *Aufklärung* 29 (2017): 35–50.
- Rutherford, Donald. "Idealism Declined: Leibniz and Christian Wolff." In *Leibniz and His Correspondents*, edited by Paul Lodge, 214–237. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Schönfeld, Martin. "Christian Wolff and Leibnizian Monads." *The Leibniz Review* 12 (2002): 131–135. doi:10.5840/leibniz20021214
- Straßberger, Andres. "Johann Gustav Reinbeck (1683–1741): Pietismus und Aufklärung." In *Protestantismus in Preußen: Lebensbilder aus seiner Geschichte*, edited by Albrecht Beutel, vol. 1, 163–183. Frankfurt: Chrismon, 2009.
- Strickland, Lloyd, ed. *Leibniz and the Two Sophies: The Philosophical Correspondence*. Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2011.
- Thiel, Udo. *The Early Modern Subject: Self-Consciousness and Personal Identity from Descartes to Hume*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Thümmig, Ludwig Philipp. *Demonstratio immortalitatis animae ex intima eius natura deducta*. Halle: Hilliger, 1721.
- Thümmig, Ludwig Philipp. *Meletemata varii et rarioris argumenti*. Braunschweig: Renger, 1727.
- Watkins, Eric. "From Pre-established Harmony to Physical Influx: Leibniz's Reception in Eighteenth Century Germany." *Perspectives on Science* 6 (1998): 136–203. doi:10.1162/posc_a_00547
- Vitriarius, [Johann Jacob]. "De statu animae separatae post mortem, ad illustrandum historiam Lazari aliorumque a mortuis resuscitatorum." *Acta Eruditorum* (August 1722): 393–396.
- Whitmer, Kelly J. "Eclecticism and the Technologies of Discernment in Pietist Pedagogy." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 70 (2009): 545–567. doi:10.1353/jhi.0.0050
- Winckler, Johann Heinrich. *Institutiones philosophiae universae*. Leipzig: Fritsch, 1742.
- Winckler, Johann Heinrich. *Institutiones philosophiae Wolfianae utriusque contemplativae et activae*. Leipzig: Fritsch, 1735. Reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 2002.
- Wolff, Christian. *Anmerkungen über die vernünfftige Gedancken von Gott, der Welt und Seele des Menschen, auch allen Dingen überhaupt*. Frankfurt: Andreä, 1724. Reprinted with notes by Charles A. Corr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1983.
- Wolff, Christian. "De notione morbi." In *Horae subsecivae marburgenses anni 1729. Trimestre autumnale*, 478–516. Frankfurt: Renger, 1729. Reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 1983.
- Wolff, Christian. *Discursus praeliminaris de philosophia in genere*. Edited by Günter Gawlick and Lothar Kreimendahl. Stuttgart: Frommann, 1996.
- Wolff, Christian. *Meletemata mathematico-philosophica*. Halle: Renger, 1755. Reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 1974.
- Wolff, Christian. *Monitum ad Commentationem luculentam de differentia nexus rerum sapientis et fatalis necessitatis*. Halle: Renger, 1724. Reprinted in *Opuscula metaphysica*. Hildesheim: Olms, 1983.
- Wolff, Christian. *Psychologia rationalis methodo scientifica pertractata*. Frankfurt: Renger, 1734. Reprinted with notes by Jean École. Hildesheim: Olms, 1972.
- Wolff, Christian. *Sämtliche Rezensionen in den Acta Eruditorum (1705–1731)*. Edited by Hubert A. Laeven and Lucy J. M. Laeven-Aretz. 5 vols. Hildesheim: Olms, 2001.
- Wolff, Christian. *Vernünfftige Gedancken von den Würckungen der Natur*. Halle: Renger, 1723. Reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 1981.
- Wolff, Christian. *Vernünfftige Gedancken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen, auch allen Dingen überhaupt*. 5th ed. Halle: Renger, 1751. Reprinted with notes by Charles A. Corr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1983.
- Wundt, Max. *Die deutsche Schulphilosophie im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*. Tübingen: Mohr, 1945.