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# Clarke's Extended Soul

EZIO VAILATI

DESCARTES NOTORIOUSLY denied that the soul is extended, at least in the same way in which *res extensa* is, because extension and thought are distinct attributes belonging to different types of substance, body and mind. His view was vigorously attacked by Henry More, who, to Descartes's claim that the soul could be considered extended only in the sense that its operations can affect the body, rather pointedly replied that since the operations of a substance are nothing but its modifications, spirits must be substantially present where they operate, and consequently must be extended.<sup>1</sup>

However, the claim that the soul is extended was apparently at odds with the traditional immaterialist view that the soul is indivisible. More's difficulties were indicative of the problem. At times, he seemed satisfied with merely claiming that there is no contradiction in the notion of a soul which is both extended and indivisible, i.e., such that its parts are so tied together as to be inseparable.\* At other times, he tried to prove that the soul is indivisible by dubious arguments revolving around the notion of necessary emanation from the "*Center of the Spirit*, which is not a Mathematical point, but Substance, so little in magnitude, that it is *indivisible*."<sup>3</sup> However, in spite of More's protestations to the contrary, it seemed clear that the infinite littleness of the centers of spirits could at most guarantee *de facto* indivisibility and would fall short of the essential indivisibility which was traditionally attributed to the soul.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See More's third letter to Descartes, in Henry More, *Opera Omnia* (London, 1674–79; reprint Hildesheim, 1966), vol. II, tome 2, p. 255. Henceforth cited as More, followed by volume, tome, and page numbers. The same point is repeated, e.g., in *Enchiridium Metaphysicum*, ch. 27, sec. 5, in More, II, 1, 309, in the middle of a sustained attack against nullibilism, the position that the soul is not in space and which More associated most closely with Descartes, whom he called "nullibistarum princeps" (ch. 27, sec. 2, in More, II, 1, 307). On Descartes's reception in England, see A. Pacchi, *Cartesio in Inghilterra da More a Boyle* (Bari, 1973).

\* More, *Immortalitas Animae*, bk. 1, ch. 2, sec. 12, in More, II, 2, 294–95.

<sup>3</sup> More, *Immortalitas Animae*, bk. 1, ch. 6, sec. 1, in More, II, 2, 302. For his views on emanation, see secs. 2–3, in More II, 2, 302–303.

<sup>4</sup> More, *Immortalitas Animae*, bk. 1, ch. 6, sec. 3, in More, II, 2, 303. For More, the soul enjoys "perfect *indivisibility* of the parts, although not an intellectual *indivisibility*" (*Immortalitas Animae*, bk.

Among the philosophers who agreed with More's suggestion that the soul is both extended and indivisible was Samuel Clarke.<sup>5</sup> He held that the soul is an essential unity, and consequently necessarily indivisible, because it is the subject in which consciousness, itself an essentially unitary power, inheres. In light of More's problems, it should come as no surprise that Clarke's thesis that the soul is an essential unity which is also extended was repeatedly attacked. In particular, the issue of the extension of the soul played a significant role in the correspondence between Clarke and Leibniz. What follows is a study of Clarke's claim that the soul is both essentially indivisible and extended, and of the challenges presented to it by two philosophers engaged in controversy with him, namely, Anthony Collins and Leibniz. In addition, we shall briefly consider two objections which an anonymous correspondent aimed at Clarke's claims about divine immensity, because Clarke's replies will prove relevant to the issue of the extension of the soul. The material considered was written in the period between 1704 and 1716, Clarke's philosophically most productive years.

#### 1. THE EXTENSION OF THE SOUL

According to Clarke, while God is not in space, everything else, including souls and thoughts, is.<sup>6</sup> Not only is the soul in space, but it is in a particular place, the *sensorium*, which a part of the brain occupies (C. to L., IV, 37).

I, ch. 6, sec. 3; see also sec. 5, in More II, 2, 303). One might infer that for More God could split a soul, but such a conclusion would be wrong. He held that even material atoms, although intellectually divisible because extended, cannot be divided by God because of their "real infinite littleness," even if, of course, God could annihilate them (Scholium to sec. 3 of the Preface to *Immortalitas Animae*, in More, II, 2, 288).

<sup>5</sup>Samuel Clarke (1675–1729) was one of the foremost defenders of Newtonian physics and almost Newton's philosophical alter ego. In 1695, he translated into Latin Rohault's Cartesian textbook of physics, showing the superiority of the Newtonian theory through abundant notes to the text. In 1706, Newton entrusted him with the translation into Latin of the *Opticks*. Clarke's philosophical reputation rests with his Boyle lectures of 1704–1705, his controversies with Collins on whether matter can think (1706–1708) and on freedom of the will (1716), his exchange with Butler on the nature of space and time (1712–13) and, of course, his correspondence with Leibniz (1715–16). He was generally considered the foremost British philosopher of his generation.

Anthony Collins (1676–1729), whose objections to Clarke we consider below, was a Deist, a free thinker and a somewhat loose follower of Locke, with whom he had established close personal ties towards the end of Locke's life. For more on Clarke's life, see J. P. Ferguson, *An Eighteenth-Century Heretic: Dr. Samuel Clarke* (Kineton, 1976). For more on Collins, see J. O'Higgins, *Determinism and Free Will* (The Hague, 1976), which contains a reprint of Collins's work on free will and a very useful introduction. The *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* has entries for both Clarke and Collins.

<sup>6</sup>See Clarke's fifth answer to Leibniz, secs. 79–82, in *Correspondance Leibniz-Clarke présentée d'après manuscrits originaux des bibliothèques de Hanovre et de Londres*, A. Robinet, ed., (Paris, 1957). Further references to Leibniz's or Clarke's letters will be C. to L. (Clarke to Leibniz) or L. to C. (Leibniz to Clarke), followed by letter number and section.

Clarke inferred the presence of the soul in the *sensorium* through an argument reminiscent of More's. It employed two independent premises: first, that something can act only where it is substantially, and second, that the soul acts on the body. The conclusion is that the soul is substantially present where (at least) a part of the body is (C. to L., III, 11–12).

The claim that something can act only where it is substantially was clearly stated by Clarke in his third letter to Leibniz:

How the soul of a seeing man, sees the images to which it is present, we know not: but we are sure it cannot perceive what it is not present to; because nothing can act, or be acted upon, where it is not.

God, being omnipresent, is really present to every thing essentially and substantially. His presence manifests it self indeed by operation, but it could not operate if it were not there. (C. to L., III, 11–12)

In sum, for Clarke, as for Newton, not even God can be present somewhere merely by operation.<sup>7</sup>

Whether for Clarke the body causally acts on the mind is not clear, but there is ample evidence that for him the mind does causally affect the body.<sup>8</sup> The experiential evidence that we are endowed with a power of self-motion by virtue of a principle which allows us to move our bodies is so great that one ought to be ashamed to deny it (W, II, 558).<sup>9</sup> For Clarke, this principle of self-motion is the soul (W, III, 898; C. to L., IV, 32). It is the soul which acting

<sup>7</sup>C. to L., III, 12, note (a); “[God] is omnipresent not virtually only but also substantially; for virtue cannot subsist without substance,” I. Newton, *Sir Isaac Newton's Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy and His System of the World*, A. Motte and F. Cajori, trans., (Berkeley, 1947), General Scholium. For a similar point, but applied only to the soul and not to God, see Locke's *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, P. H. Nidditch, ed. (Oxford, 1975), bk. II, chap. 23, secs. 19–21. E. Grant, *Much Ado about Nothing* (Cambridge, 1981), 146, 157, points out how the principle that action requires spatial contact between the agent and the patient was accepted by Aquinas (and Suárez) as metaphysically necessary and consequently applicable to God as well as to creatures. By contrast, Grant points out that Scotus denied that it applies to God, whose will is sufficient to bring about the effect willed. Leibniz seems to have followed Scotus, Clarke Aquinas.

<sup>8</sup>As an example of Clarke's apparent wobbling on the issue of whether the body causally affects the mind, see, among others, C. to L., II, 12; Samuel Clarke, *The Works* (London, 1738; reprint, New York, 1978), vol. II, pp. 545, 753; vol. III, p. 897. Henceforth cited as W, followed by volume and page. To my knowledge, Clarke's views on the mind-body relation, especially in connection with Occasionalism, have not been satisfactorily studied. On this, see J. E. Le Rossignol, *The Ethical Philosophy of Samuel Clarke* (published doctoral dissertation, Leipzig, 1892), esp. 29–30; J. P. Ferguson, *The Philosophy of Dr. Samuel Clarke and Its Critics* (New York, 1974), esp. 244–45; H. M. Ducharme, *The Moral Self, Moral Knowledge and God: An Analysis of the Theory of Samuel Clarke* (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Oriel College, 1984), esp. 49–50, where Ducharme takes the view that Clarke is a one-way interactionist.

<sup>9</sup>See also W, III, 850, 898; C. to L., III, 12; V, 110–16 for further evidence that for Clarke the soul moves the body. On this issue, Newton agreed with Clarke: see Newton's letter to Conti, February 26, 1716, in Robinet, *Correspondance Leibniz-Clarke*, 63.

upon the brain mediately brings about effects in the body in accordance with laws established by God (C. to L., III, 12).

Moreover, there are clear indications that for Clarke the capacity of the soul to affect the body causally is a consequence of our being endowed with liberty. He chastized Leibniz for denying that we can generate new force, e.g., move our bodies. If we could not move our bodies, then we would not be agents but, barring the view that our actions are supernatural, we would be machines like clocks and our actions, if one could call them so, would be ruled by determinism (C. to L., IV, 32, 33; V, 92, 93–95). But for Clarke, who was a strict libertarian, determinism is incompatible with freedom (W, III, 905).<sup>10</sup> Hence, the consequence of denying that our souls move our bodies when we intentionally move them would be disastrous, since Clarke was convinced that freedom is a necessary condition for morality and religion (W, III, 905; IV, 735). So, not only did he hold that the soul causally affects the body, but this view was a very important component of his philosophy. In sum, since the soul operates on the body and operation requires substantial presence, the soul must be substantially present to the body.

Saying that the soul must be substantially present where a part of the brain is does not fully determine how the soul is present. It certainly rules out mere operational presence, but it fails to determine whether the soul's presence is to be understood in terms of "holenmerism" or in terms of mere garden variety extension.<sup>11</sup> However, there is cumulative evidence that for Clarke the soul is merely coextended with a part of the brain. As we shall see, Clarke used an analogy with space, which he took to be both extended and indivisible, to explain how the soul could be extended and indivisible; but certainly holenmerism does not apply to space. He did not address More's critique of holenmerism, as one would expect him to do had he adopted it. He did not address Leibniz's accusation that the extension of the soul destroys its unity by appealing to holenmerism; rather, he defended the claim that, as he put it, the soul "fills the sensorium" (C. to L., V, 98). Finally, Leibniz clearly attributed to him the view that the soul is extended.<sup>12</sup> In sum, Clarke sided with More against Descartes and the Scholastics: the soul is a substance coextended with a part of the body.

<sup>10</sup> For a helpful discussion of Clarke's views on freedom, see W. L. Rowe, "Causality and Free Will in the Controversy between Collins and Clarke," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 25 (1987): 51–67.

<sup>11</sup> "Holenmerism" was the name More coined for the Scholastic view that the soul is in the body whole in every part and whole in the whole. Against this view, More launched a powerful attack; see, e.g., *Enchiridium Metaphysicum*, ch. 27, secs. 11–15, in More, II, 1, 312–15, and Grant's discussion, in Grant, *Much Ado about Nothing*, 223–25. Grant also points out that, *mutatis mutandis*, holenmerism had been taken to apply to God's substantial presence in the world.

<sup>12</sup> Leibniz to Caroline, Nov. 1715, in Robinet, *Correspondance Leibniz-Clarke*, 21, quoted below.

## 2. THE UNITY OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE CONTROVERSY WITH COLLINS

In 1706, Henry Dodwell published a book in which he defended conditional immortality: our souls are naturally mortal and upon the death of the body can be kept in existence only by divine supernatural intervention.<sup>13</sup> Since Dodwell was one of the most respected scholars of his time, the reactions were considerable not only in England, but on the Continent as well.<sup>14</sup> Clarke's was not late in coming. He wrote an open letter to Dodwell complaining that he had let wide the floodgates to Libertinism by providing an excuse for the wicked not to fear eternal punishment (W, III, 721). He then argued that the soul, being immaterial, is naturally immortal, by giving his own version of the traditional argument for the immateriality of the soul from the alleged unity of consciousness:

That the Soul cannot possibly be *Material* . . . is demonstrable from the single consideration, even of bare Sense or Consciousness it self. For *Matter* being a divisible Substance, consisting always of separable, nay actually separate and distinct parts, 'tis plain, that unless it were essentially Conscious, in which case every particle of Matter must consist of innumerable separate and distinct Consciousnesses, no System of it in any possible Composition or Division, can be any individual Conscious Being: For, suppose three or three hundred Particles of Matter, at a Mile or any given distance one from another; is it possible that all those separate parts should in that State be one individual Conscious Being? Suppose then all these particles brought together into one System, so as to touch one another; will they thereby, or by any Motion or Composition whatsoever, become any whit less truly distinct Beings, than they were when at the greatest distance? How can their being disposed in any possible System, make them one individual conscious Being? If you will suppose God by his infinite Power superadding Consciousness to the united Particles, yet still those Particles being really and necessarily as distinct Beings as ever, cannot be themselves the Subject in which that individual Consciousness inheres, but the Consciousness can only be superadded by the addition of Something, which in all the Particles must still it self be but one individual Being. The Soul therefore, whose Power of thinking is undeniably one Individual Consciousness, cannot possibly be a *Material* Substance. (W, III, 730)<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> H. Dodwell, *An Epistolary Discourse, proving, from the Scriptures and the First Fathers, that the Soul is a Principle naturally mortal; but immortalized actually by the Pleasure of God, to Punishment; or, to Reward, by its union with the Divine Baptismal Spirit. Wherein is proved, that none may have the power of giving this divine immortalizing Spirit, since the Apostles, but only the Bishops* (London, 1706).

<sup>14</sup> For example, Leibniz knew, and probably read, Dodwell's book. He wrote Smith, an English divine, that he was surprised that a scholar like Dodwell could write such paradoxes on the nature of the soul: Leibniz to Smith, September 2, 1707, in *Leibniz-Briefwechsel* 872, fo. 102, in Leibniz-Archiv, Niedersächsische Landesbibliothek, Hanover.

<sup>15</sup> This sort of argument was quite old. Its history has been documented by B. L. Mijuskovic, *The Achilles of Rationalist Arguments* (The Hague, 1974). It is also the argument which Kant, after accepting it in the precritical period, allegedly destroyed in the Second Paralogism. See K. Ameriks, *Kant's Theory of Mind* (Oxford, 1982), ch. 2. To my knowledge, there is neither a satisfactory nor even a full-scale analysis of Clarke's version (or versions) of the argument from

This was a very ambitious argument, as one can see by comparison with other arguments from consciousness to immateriality, e.g., Locke's. Locke agreed that matter on its own cannot possibly produce thought either in itself or in anything else. Therefore, from the fact that we think, he concluded that God, our maker, must be immaterial.<sup>16</sup> However, Locke was ready to admit that God could superadd thought to matter, and consequently that we could not exclude with metaphysical certainty that our minds are material.<sup>17</sup> By contrast, Clarke's argument attempted to prove not merely that matter cannot possibly produce thought, but also that it would be metaphysically impossible for matter to be the subject of inherence of thought. Not only could matter not possibly think on its own, but not even God could make it think, since God is bound by the laws of logic and metaphysics (W, III, 841).

Clarke's argument failed to convince Anthony Collins, whose intervention in defense of Dodwell started a protracted controversy. Collins was ready to accept Clarke's claim that consciousness is an individual power, namely, that it is not an aggregate of consciousness (W, III, 800, 784). However, he disagreed with Clarke's claim that an individual power such as consciousness cannot but inhere in an individual subject, namely, a being which, as Clarke put it, is "essentially one, i.e., such that any division in it destroys its essence" (W, III, 795). Consequently, he disagreed with Clarke's contention that only an individual substance, e.g., a soul, can be the subject of consciousness.

In particular, Collins wondered how an immaterial substance like the soul can be indivisible if one assumes, as apparently one ought, that it is extended (W, III, 758). To Collins's apparent surprise, instead of rejecting the view that the soul is extended, Clarke replied:

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the unity of consciousness. In addition to Mijuskovic, see H. Ducharme, "Personal Identity in Samuel Clarke," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 24 (1986): 359–83, esp. 378–82; J. W. Yolton, *Thinking Matter: Materialism in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Minneapolis, 1983), esp. 39–41; R. Attfield, "Clarke, Collins and Compounds," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 15 (1977): 45–54. Although it would take too long to argue the point, I believe that Clarke's argument, minus bells and frills, revolves around three basic claims, namely:

1. Necessarily consciousness is an individual power (W, III, 784).
2. An individual power can only be produced by, or inhere in, an individual being (W, III, 760; repeated, with respect to the brain at W, III, 790–91).
3. Matter is not, and cannot possibly be, an individual being (W, III, 791).

The conclusion is that consciousness cannot possibly be the product of, or inhere in, matter. Each of the three premises has problems of its own, but (1) and (2) are the most controversial and interesting. Collins accepted (1), wrongly in my opinion, was ready to concede (3) not with relation to matter *per se*, but to systems of matter, but categorically rejected (2).

<sup>16</sup> Locke, *Essay*, IV, 10, 16. See also J. L. Mackie, *The Miracle of Theism* (Oxford, 1982), chap. 7; M. R. Ayers, "Mechanism, Superaddition, and the Proof of God's Existence in Locke's *Essay*," *Philosophical Review* 90 (1981): 210–51.

<sup>17</sup> Locke, *Essay*, IV, 3, 6.

How far such *Indiscerpibility* can be reconciled and be consistent with some kind of *Expansion*; that is, what *unknown Properties* are joined together with these *known ones* of Consciousness and Indiscerpibility; is another Question of considerable Difficulty, but of no Necessity to be resolved in the Present Argument. Only This: As the Parts of *Space* or *Expansion* itself, can demonstrably be proved to be *absolutely Indiscerpible*; so it ought not to be reckoned an insuperable Difficulty, to imagine that all *Immaterial Thinking Substances* (upon Supposition that *Expansion* is not excluded out of their Idea,) may be so likewise. (W, III, 763)

One can sympathize with Clarke's reply: on the one hand, his views on freedom, with their ties to morality and religion, conjoined with his views on causality, pushed him towards the view that the soul is extended. On the other hand, he understood the problems involved in the claim that the soul is extended and is also an individual, essentially indivisible, immaterial being, and consequently tried to separate the issue of immateriality from that of extension.

Clarke's reference to space did not impress Collins. He still could not see how an extended substance could be essentially indivisible. All finite extended things, he claimed, must "so far consist of Parts, that the part of one side is not the part of the other side. . . . Suppose the substance of the soul to be four inches square . . . it does not appear to me, that an inch on one side . . . is more dependent on an inch on the other side, as to each other's existence, than two sides of a perfectly solid Particle of matter are" (W, III, 775). In Collins's eyes, Clarke's attribution of extension to the soul undermined the argument for its immateriality and consequently rendered his own materialist position more attractive. True, space has parts and yet it is indivisible, but this, Collins claimed without explaining, is due to its infinity and to the fact that space is "mere Absence or Place of Bodies" (W, III, 775).

In his reply, Clarke reasserted that the issue of the extension of the soul is logically independent of the argument for the immateriality of the soul (W, III, 794). Furthermore, he claimed, even if the supposition that immateriality (and consequently indivisibility) and extension are compatible entailed difficulties which one could not clearly solve, the proof for the immateriality of the soul would not be weakened unless one could show that the proof itself is defective. The reason is that "there are many Demonstrations even in abstract Mathematicks themselves, which no Man who understands them can in the least doubt of the Certainty of, which yet are attended with difficult Consequences that cannot perfectly be cleared, The infinite Divisibility of Quantity, is an instance of this kind" (W, III, 794). As further examples, Clarke cited divine eternity and immensity, which, although self-evident, involve considerable difficulty.

One can hardly see the strength of Clarke's point, since there is no parity between the cases he discussed. For him, it is demonstrable that a geometrical



line is infinitely divisible, and, if we are sure of the proof, the difficulties surrounding the composition of the continuum can be set aside. This position, I believe, is completely correct. Suppose, however, that the infinite divisibility of a geometrical line were a mere hypothesis, as the extension of the soul is allegedly taken to be by Clarke; then the difficulties surrounding it would be a good reason for rejecting it outright. Therefore, if the supposition of the extension of the soul involves one in difficulties, e.g., with respect to the soul's indivisibility, one should give it up—unless, of course, the claim that the soul is extended, far from being a mere supposition, is taken to be demonstrated. Clarke showed no sign of being ready to jettison the view that the soul is extended, although for strategic reasons he emphasized its independence of the proof for the soul's immateriality. The reason, I believe, was that he felt as certain of the soul's extension as of its immateriality. The analogy with the infinite divisibility of quantity worked not with respect to the position Clarke prudently put forth against Collins, but with respect to his true one. In this sense, his analogy betrayed his true views.

Clarke continued by remarking that, at any rate, the difficulties surrounding the ascription of extension to the soul are not so grave as those surrounding the attribution of infinite divisibility to quantity or eternity and immensity to God. Space, Clarke claimed, is not mere absence of bodies; it is extended and yet indivisible because it is "an extension whose parts (improperly so called) depend on each other for their existence, not only because of its infinity, but because of the contradiction which a separation of them manifestly would imply" (W, III, 794).<sup>18</sup> All one has to do, Clarke continued, is to think of the soul as a substance whose parts depend on each other, like those of space (W, III, 795). This answer left Collins dissatisfied, and Clarke cut short this part of the debate by refusing to discuss the issue further (W, III, 821, 851). He had grown impatient with Collins, but perhaps he had also seen that his position was rather problematic. To see why, let us look at his claim that an individual power can only be produced by, or inhere in, an individual being, which, as we saw, was the main point of contention with Collins.

Clarke's claim tries to transfer a feature of a property (being individual) to the subject of that property. Such a transfer seems quite plausible in some cases. For example, duration seems to be a transferable feature: while a property lasts, so must its subject. But counterexamples are easily found: inherence is not a transferable feature, because while a property inheres in something its subject need not. However, Clarke thought he had a powerful argument for the permissibility of the transference at issue. Against Collins's accusation that

<sup>18</sup>C. to L., II, 4. The contradiction Clarke referred to arises, he thought, because separating a part of space from another entails moving it, that is, taking it out of itself; see C. to L., II, 4.

he had simply assumed that an individual power like consciousness could not inhere in a nonindividual subject like matter, Clarke replied:

I think it is *proved* strongly, that Consciousness cannot reside in a Being that consists of a Multitude of separate and distinct Parts: Because if it could, it must necessarily follow, either that it would become a Multitude of distinct Consciousnesses, contrary to the Supposition which you yourself allow; or else that an Individual Quality of each single Particle, would become the Individual Quality of every one of the rest likewise, which is a Contradiction in Terms; or else, that Consciousness would be one Power resulting from the contributing Powers of all the several separate and distinct Particles; in which case, it would be, as I have before proved in enumerating the several kinds of Powers, a mere *abstract Name* or *complex Notion* and not a real Quality residing in any Subject at all. (W, III, 791)

While not clear, presumably Clarke's argument (let us call it "the unity argument") can be rendered as follows. If consciousness resided in a composite being C, then either it would be constituted by a multitude of consciousnesses or not. If the former, then the unitary nature of consciousness would be lost. If the latter, then two cases would be possible. In the first case, the consciousness of C would be the consciousness of one of its parts P. But this is impossible because then C, P, and, Clarke seemed to hold, all the parts of C would have the same numerical consciousness, which contravenes the principle that the properties or powers of different subjects are numerically different. In the second case, the consciousness of C would be a supervenient feature. But then that consciousness would not be a power in the true sense of the term, that is, a quality inhering in the composite C.<sup>19</sup> The reason is to be found in a principle we may call "homogeneity": a power can really inhere in a composite only if it is of the same kind as the powers of the parts (W, III, 759). For example, a composite has weight only insofar as its parts do; it can have shape only insofar as its parts do, etc. Clarke had an argument for the principle of homogeneity in the case in which the power of the whole is caused by the powers of the parts. If supervenient or nonhomogeneous powers could arise, then "the Effect would contain more than it was in the *Cause*; that is, some-

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<sup>19</sup> Clarke claimed that all powers and qualities fall into three mutually exclusive classes. Either they inhere in the subjects to which they are ascribed; for example, size inheres in the particle of matter it is ascribed to. Or, they do not inhere in the subject they are usually ascribed to, but they inhere in another subject; for example, color does not inhere in the rose, but in the soul. Or, they are not powers or qualities at all, but effects of systems of matter; for example, "*Magnetism*, and *Electrical Attractions*, are not *real Qualities* at all, residing in any subject, but *merely Abstract Names* to express the *Effects* of some determinate motions of certain Streams of Matter" (W, III, 760). Since consciousness cannot inhere in a composite like the brain, and the materialist does not want to claim that the motions in the brain produce thought in something else, he is left with what Clarke considered the obviously unacceptable conclusion that consciousness is not a mode of the brain, but merely the effect of the motions of the brain.

thing would without any Efficient [cause], be produced out of nothing" (W, III, 786). However, the principle of homogeneity held in the case of superaddition as well. If a power were superadded to a composite, then it would have to inhere proportionally in its parts because a composite is merely the sum of its parts, and consequently its powers can only be the sum of the powers of the parts (W, III, 759, 827).

The unity argument revolves around two points: first, that the properties of separable and distinct parts are numerically different; second, that a power can really inhere in a composite only if it is of the same kind as the powers of the parts, that is, the principle of homogeneity. But these two claims hold, if at all, not only of separable and distinct parts, but of parts *simpliciter*. For, each distinct part of a whole constitutes a different subject of inherence, and different subjects of inherence must have numerically distinct powers. To use Clarke's own example of something whose parts are inseparable, the property a part of space has of being filled is not the same numerical property another part of space has. If it were, it would be impossible for one of the two parts to be filled while the other is not, which is absurd. Similarly, insofar as Clarke had an argument for the principle of homogeneity, supervenient powers were excluded not because they would arise from separable parts, but because they would be uncaused or would entail that a composite is not made up of its parts. It follows, then, that the unity argument proves a stronger claim than Clarke thought. For it proves, if anything, not only that an individual power such as consciousness cannot be produced by, or inhere in, something that is divisible, but also that it cannot be produced by, or inhere in, something which has parts *simpliciter*. But then the unity argument can be used against the view that the soul is extended because, as Leibniz was to point out, what is extended has distinct parts, be they separable or not. So it does not seem that the indivisibility of the soul is sufficient to save its extension.

### 3. AN ANONYMOUS OPPONENT

Around 1713, a few years after the exchange with Collins had come to an end, Clarke received a letter from an anonymous opponent who alleged that the immensity of God, that is, divine extension, is incompatible with divine simplicity and "spirituality" (W, II, 753).<sup>20</sup> Clarke answered the accusation that sim-

<sup>20</sup>Clarke's views on divine omnipresence are notoriously difficult to make out, and any attempt to arrive at a crisp formulation of his position is likely to be frustrated by Clarke's own remark that we do not really understand how God is omnipresent (W, II, 541). According to Grant, Clarke and Newton held that God is actually extended and dimensional (Grant, *Much Ado about Nothing*, 244). For an opposing view, according to which holoism applies to God, see J. E. McGuire, "Existence, Actuality and Necessity: Newton on Space and Time," *Annals of Science* (1978): 463–508. Although McGuire's discussion is about Newton only, presumably the same

licity and spirituality are incompatible with extension by accusing his interlocutor of Scholastic obscurantism, and by appealing to the symmetry between space and time. Although the setting of the discussion was theological, Clarke's arguments were not, and consequently they allow us to understand his view about the extension of the soul better by pointing out some of Clarke's reasons for believing that being extended is not incompatible with being simple and conscious. God's immensity, Clarke claimed, does not destroy divine simplicity because "the *Immensity* of Space, (it being throughout *absolutely uniform* and *essentially indivisible*,) is no more inconsistent with *Simplicity*, than the *uniform successive flowing of the Parts of Duration*, (as you most rightly observe,) are inconsistent with *Simplicity*. There is no difficulty at all in this point, but a mere *Prejudice*, and a *False Notion of Simplicity* (W, II, 753). The seam of the argument consisted in claiming parity between temporal and spatial extension; since the former is no problem for the simplicity of a subject, neither is the latter. We do not possess the reply of Clarke's anonymous interlocutor. However, it must be admitted that Clarke's point was not quite convincing because it stated the existence of a relevant parity between temporal and spatial extension rather than providing a satisfactory argument for it. Worse, it is far from clear that such an argument could be provided. For, consider an object A stretching from one side of a room to the other; then, the middle of the room is occupied by a part of A. By contrast, consider A "stretching" from noon till midnight; then what is found at four o'clock is not part of A, but the whole of A. Therefore, the analogical counterpart of a thing A stretching spatially is not A "stretching" temporally, as Clarke would have it, but a collection of A's.<sup>21</sup>

To the accusation that extension destroys God's spirituality, that is, that it makes God material, Clarke replied with an argument purporting to show that extension is compatible with the unity of consciousness: "The individual

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point could be made about Clarke. For Grant's critique of McGuire, see Grant, *Much Ado about Nothing*, 416, note 420. I broadly agree with Grant, since I find it hard to see why Clarke so vigorously denied Leibniz's charge that extension is incompatible with divine simplicity without making any reference to holism, unless he was ready to think of divine omnipresence in terms of actual extension and dimensionality of the divine substance. Indeed, this is the position Leibniz attributed to him in Dec. 1715 in a letter to J. Bernoulli (Robinet, *Correspondance Leibniz-Clarke*, 45).

<sup>21</sup> A similar, albeit ahistorical, point can be made by considering the "extension" in time of a simple object, e.g., an atom, in terms of atom-stages. At each instant there is one and only one atom-stage, and the existence of appropriate relations among the atom-stages determines the diachronic identity and simplicity of the atom. But for the analogy between spatial extension and temporal "extension" to hold, one ought to consider not the atom, but the set of atom-stages. That is, the temporal analog of the spatially extended atom is not the individual atom "stretching" in time, but the set of atom-stages. But while the atom is simple by hypothesis, the set of atom-stages is not.

Consciousness of One Immense Being, is as truly *One*; as the present Moment of Time is *Individually One*, in all Places at once. And the One can no more properly said to be an *Ell* or a *Mile of Consciousness*, . . . than the other can be said to be an *Ell* or a *Mile of Time*" (W, II, 753). While it is unfortunate that we do not have the letter of Clarke's anonymous opponent, presumably the objection was that if consciousness were extended, then it would be possible to consider a (spatial) part of it as being itself conscious. But this possibility shows that an extended consciousness is not a unity because if a (spatial) part of consciousness were a consciousness, then the whole consciousness would be a multitude of consciousnesses.

As before, Clarke's reply invoked the symmetry between space and time. He started by pointing out that an instant of time is the same everywhere. The point was strictly Newtonian; in the *General Scholium* to the second edition of his *Principia* Newton stated that "every part of space is *always*, and every indivisible moment of duration is *everywhere*." Space, Clarke claimed, is temporally "extended" and time is spatially extended, since time exists in all places in the same way in which space exists at all times. But, Clarke thought, the spatial extension of one instant of time does not affect its unity and does not justify the claim that one instant of time stretches for, say, one mile. The evidence for this conclusion, Clarke seemed to hold, is given by the fact that we do not think, or talk, about time in terms of, say, miles. Similarly, he concluded, from the fact that consciousness is extended, we should not infer that it is proper to talk about it in terms of miles.

However, this argument has problems of its own, although Clarke was so satisfied with it that he told his interlocutor to give it particular thought. If one assumes that an instant of time is infinitely extended, one is implicitly assuming that it is extended for at least one mile. That is, if time is spatially extended, then it is a four-dimensional entity, embodying a temporal coordinate and three spatial coordinates. But then, why one should be allowed to apply metric considerations along one coordinate but not along the other three is far from clear.

If the previous analysis is correct, and if one assumes, as I think one should, that Clarke was ready to apply the previous lines of argumentation to the issue of the compatibility of the extension and unitary nature of the soul, one can conclude that one of the basic reasons behind Clarke's position was his belief that spatial and temporal extension are relevantly equivalent. But this belief was, or so I have argued, mistaken.

#### 4. THE CONTROVERSY WITH LEIBNIZ

In spite of the fact that the exchange between Clarke and Collins had been well known in England and Clarke's side of the controversy, which Le Clerc

had approvingly summarized in his *Bibliothèque Choisie* in 1713, had gone through several editions, Leibniz seems to have paid little if any attention to it.<sup>22</sup> However, this state of affairs was to change quite dramatically in the last year of Leibniz's life. In October 1715, he received from Remond some letters by Conti, a Leibnizian then visiting England, which briefly explained the positions of Newton and Clarke on the soul. Newton, Conti said, speaks of the soul and the body only in relation to phenomena, and by "soul" he understands that which "thinks, feels in us. . . . He [Newton] says that he does not know more about it."<sup>23</sup> However, Conti continued, "Dr. Clarke goes further and says that one could not prove that the soul is something which belongs to the body. Here is his argument: one can show that every body is divisible; but one knows from experience [*par les phénomènes*] that the thinking substance is something indivisible. Since these two properties are contradictory, they cannot be found in the same subject. Consequently, one cannot prove that the soul and the body are the same thing."<sup>24</sup>

A month later, Princess Caroline, who was to be the intermediary in the controversy between Clarke and Leibniz, sent Leibniz two works by Clarke who, she thought, might translate the *Theodicy*.<sup>25</sup> Among them were Clarke's letters to Dodwell and Collins. By Leibniz's own admission, at first he read them somewhat cursorily, but by the end of November 1715, after the first exchange with Clarke had taken place, he was ready to give a preliminary judgment of his adversary's work:

[Clarke] often says very good things, but he falls short of following or envisaging my principles. He is right in holding against Mr. Dodwell and against an anonymous opponent that the soul is immaterial because of its indivisibility, and that all that is composed of parts cannot have anything in it which is not in its parts. Given this, I cannot see how he can maintain that the soul is extended, since everywhere there is extension there are parts, unless one takes that word in an unusual sense.<sup>26</sup>

Obviously, even on a first reading Leibniz was struck by Clarke's views on the extension of the soul, and his interest was to grow even more once they became one of the points of contention between him and Clarke.

Leibniz's opposition to the view that the soul is extended was both general and specific. For one thing, he could not agree with the motivation behind Clarke's argument for it. Clarke's principal reason for making the soul ex-

<sup>22</sup> The controversy between Clarke and Collins went through four editions by 1711, was amply discussed in England, and had some following on the Continent as well. For Le Clerc, who warmly approved of Clarke's arguments, see his *Bibliothèque Choisie* 26 (1713): 375–411.

<sup>23</sup> Robinet, *Correspondance Leibniz-Clarke*, 18.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>25</sup> Caroline to Leibniz, November 3, 1715, in Robinet, *Correspondance Leibniz-Clarke*, 21.

<sup>26</sup> Leibniz to Caroline, November 1715, in Robinet, *Correspondance Leibniz-Clarke*, 21.

tended was to guarantee the possibility of its interaction with the body which both experience and piety demanded. But for Leibniz this was a wrong-headed attempt, since he denied that any such interaction takes place. The relation between the mind and the body was not to be explained on the basis of an unintelligible interaction, but by an appeal to their divinely ordained pre-established harmony.<sup>27</sup>

However, aside from this general metaphysical criticism, Leibniz had more specific ones. After telling Caroline that he could not see how one could maintain that something is extended and without parts, he presented Clarke with a puzzle: since the soul is indivisible, as Clarke himself showed, it must be present to the body at most at one point. Then, how can it perceive what goes on outside that point? (L. to C., II, 4). It is not easy to understand Leibniz's reasoning. Since for him anything extended is divisible, one can reasonably assume that he was not claiming that the soul can be both indivisible and extended. More likely, he was looking at Clarke's position in light of More's views, such as they were, that the center of a spirit is infinitesimally small and consequently, indivisible. But clearly, the heart of Leibniz's objection consisted in the inference from indivisibility to lack of extension. Clarke's answer was to the point: indivisibility does not exclude extension; for example, space is indivisible and yet extended (C. to L., II, 4–5).

Leibniz was not satisfied. He replied by focussing more sharply on the spatial relation between the soul and the body. Saying that the soul "is diffused through the body is to make it extended and divisible; saying that the whole of it is in each part of the body is to make it divisible from itself. Attaching it to a point, spreading it out through several points, all these are nothing but abusive expressions, *idola tribus*" (L. to C., III, 12). Leibniz's strategy was, then, to foreclose any possible interpretation of the claim that the soul is extended by showing that all the traditional readings led to the divisibility of the soul. In addition, the reference to the Baconian *idola tribus* was probably not too subtle a comment on what Leibniz took to be the deplorable English tendency, from More on, to think of the soul as extended. In sum, giving extension to the soul or, worse, to God, amounted to destroying their unity.

Clarke followed a two-pronged strategy in his replies. One showed some embarrassment at Leibniz's criticism. For, he began restricting the extension of the soul, first by claiming that it is present not in the whole body but in

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<sup>27</sup>Of course Clarke disagreed; like Newton, he showed little patience with preestablished harmony. See Newton to Conti, February 26, 1716, in Robinet, *Correspondance Leibniz-Clarke*, 63; Clarke repeated the point to Leibniz: C. to L., V, 110–16. As we saw, Clarke had already claimed that we know by experience that we move our body (W, II, 558). From this he concluded that we would be justified in rejecting the claim that we move our bodies only if it involved a contradiction, which it does not.

the brain, and finally by saying that it is not present in the whole brain, but merely in a place where part of the brain is, the *sensorium* (C. to L., III, 12; IV, 37). His defense looked very much like a retreat, and Leibniz was quick to indicate that the problems surrounding Clarke's position did not depend on the amount of the soul's extension, but on its extension *simpliciter* (L. to C., V, 98). In his last reply, Clarke repeated his main contention: "If the soul be a substance which fills the sensorium, or place wherein it perceives the images of things conveyed to it; yet it does not thence follow, that it must consist of corporeal parts, (for the parts of the body are distinct substances independent of each other;) but the whole soul sees, and the whole soul hears, and the whole soul thinks, as being essentially one individual" (C. to L., V, 98).

Clarke's second strategy was, at least *prima facie*, more successful. He repeated that Leibniz's criticisms were based on a misconception of the nature of the soul which, he claimed, is like space in being both extended and indivisible. In addition, Clarke made a point he had already hinted at in his replies to Collins: the parts of space are called "parts" improperly because they cannot be separated from each other (C. to L., III, 3; IV, 11–12; W, III, 794). Again, Leibniz was not convinced. He had already mentioned to Caroline his dissatisfaction with Clarke's use of the term 'part', and he had also noticed that Clarke had told Collins on the one hand that space has parts, and on the other that these parts are so called only improperly (L. to C., IV, 12).<sup>28</sup> The issue was complicated by the fact that Leibniz had a view of space very different from his interlocutor's. In the comments written to his own fourth letter, Leibniz noted that it is certainly true that the parts of space are indivisible, but the reason is that space is an *ens rationis*, not an actually existing thing. If space were an actually existing thing, then God could change it, presumably by transposing, and hence separating, its parts.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, in his own copy of Clarke's letters to Collins, Leibniz showed how far he was ready to go in this direction by asking whether God could not destroy a part of space. He also indirectly indicated what he considered Clarke's philosophical ancestry to be by pointing out that God could divide an extended point, very likely a reference to More's centers of spirits.<sup>30</sup> However, probably convinced that these

<sup>28</sup> W, III, 763, 794.

<sup>29</sup> Robinet, *Correspondance Leibniz-Clarke*, 101.

<sup>30</sup> Leibniz reacted to Clarke's claim at W, III, 794 that the separation of parts of space is contradictory by writing in the margin of Clarke's letter: "*an Deus unam partem spatii destruere nequit.*" And he commented on Clarke's point that not even God could divide a soul by writing in the margin: "*divisio puncti a Deo.*" Leibniz's own annotated copy of the exchange between Clarke and Collins (containing only Clarke's letters) is now at the Niedersächsische Landesbibliothek in Hanover, call number T-A 1243.



objections and remarks would have little impact on Clarke, he never sent them.

Instead, Leibniz tried to show that Clarke's view was problematic on its own terms. He claimed that space, although indivisible, must have parts, since a line or a surface divides it into distinct regions (L. to C., V, 51). Leibniz was right, and his point was strategically well taken. Clarke himself had, in effect, intimated that space has distinguishable parts by telling Leibniz that "different spaces are really different or distinct from one another, though they be perfectly alike" (C. to L., III, 3; IV, 11–12). But if the soul has parts, then one may well wonder whether it can be really an essential *unity* as Clarke claimed.<sup>51</sup> Of course, *a fortiori* the same point could be made, and repeatedly was made, by Leibniz with respect to God. Moreover, Leibniz had correctly taken Clarke to hold the principle of homogeneity.<sup>52</sup> Consequently, since the soul has parts, its consciousness, according to Clarke himself, must be the aggregation of the consciousnesses of its parts, which is inconsistent with Clarke's principle of the unity of consciousness.<sup>53</sup>

Clarke's reply marked a retreat of sorts; it distinguished the notion of part from that of corporeal part, making explicit a point Clarke had already hinted at in his third reply (C. to L., III, 3). That the soul, like space, is extended might entail that it has parts, but not that it has separable parts; the soul is essentially one individual and when it sees, hears, or thinks, it does so as a whole (C. to L., V, 98). Leibniz's death put an end to the exchange, but Clarke's reply, as it stood, was hardly satisfactory, since Leibniz's criticisms did not revolve around the assumption that for Clarke the soul or its parts are material or, for what matters, separable. We shall never know what Clarke would have replied had Leibniz pressed the point.

Clarke held both that the soul is extended and that it is an essential unity. If the previous analysis is correct, ultimately he was not successful in rebuffing the attacks of those philosophers who considered his view incoherent. However, Clarke's position can be rendered less problematic. He held that space is "absolutely indivisible, even so much in thought; (to imagine its parts moved from each other, is to imagine them moved out of themselves)" (C. to L., II, 4). From the indivisibility of space he concluded that the parts of space are interdependent, that is, the positing of one entails the positing of all the others, and ultimately the positing of space as a whole (W, III, 794–795). Against Leibniz,

<sup>51</sup> That this point was on Leibniz's mind is clearly indicated by the fact that he commented on Clarke's claim to Collins that "the Consciousness of a Man, is not a Multitude of Consciousnesses, but One" (W, III, 790) by writing under the word "Consciousness" "étendue" and "durété."

<sup>52</sup> Leibniz to Caroline, November 1715, in Robinet, *Correspondance Leibniz-Clarke*, 32.

<sup>53</sup> The point was made by Leibniz in the letter to Caroline referred to in note 26 and given in the text.

who was ready to admit that the parts of space presuppose the whole of space because space is merely an *ens rationis*, Clarke consistently maintained both the priority of space over its parts and its real existence.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, pursuing the analogy between the soul and space, he could maintain that the soul is not merely indivisible, but that it is a totality in which the whole is logically antecedent to the parts. Hence, at least some of its powers as a whole could not depend on those of its parts. Clarke could then claim that consciousness is one of these powers, and consequently that the extension of the soul is compatible with his argument for the soul's immortality. For the objection against their compatibility was based on the alleged dependence of the composite subject's consciousness on the consciousnesses or powers of the parts. Consequently, his system did have the resources to deal with the objections launched against it. Ultimately, then, Clarke's belief that the unity of the soul is compatible with its extension stood on a stronger ground than his critics were ready to admit.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Leibniz's views on the issue are clearly expressed in his letter to Des Bosses of July 31, 1709. See C. I. Gerhardt, ed., *Die Philosophische Schriften von G. W. Leibniz* (Berlin, 1875–90), vol. II, p. 379. Clarke intimated a point Kant was to make explicitly, namely, that space is not a *totum syntheticum*, i.e., a totality which is logically dependent on its parts, but a *totum analyticum*, namely, a totality whose parts presuppose it.

<sup>35</sup> I wish to thank Albert Heinekamp for confirming that the notes on the edition of Clarke's letters to Collins now at the Niedersächsische Landesbibliothek in Hanover are in Leibniz's own hand. I also thank Julie Ward, Marleen Rozemond, Edwin Curley, Nicholas Jolley and two anonymous referees, all of whom have provided help or comments.