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# Leibniz on the Eucharist

Outline of a New Metaphysics in *On Transubstantiation* (1668)\*

## Leibniz sur l'Eucharistie

Esquisse d'une nouvelle métaphysique dans *De Transsubstantiatione* (1668)

## Leibniz und die Eucharistie

Grundzüge einer neuen Metaphysik in *De Transsubstantiatione* (1668)

**ABSTRACT:** Leibniz's lifelong involvement in debating the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist is central to his philosophical development. In this paper, I will examine Leibniz's preoccupation with the Eucharist beginning in 1668 in *De Transsubstantiatione*. Leibniz tries to defend the Christian mystery of the Eucharist by establishing a new metaphysics that reconciles Cartesian mechanism with the substantial forms of scholasticism. Since for the early Leibniz a body can only be called a substance, if it is united with a mind, transubstantiation, on which the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist depends, must be understood as a change with regard to a mind to which the bodies of bread and wine are substantially united: It is no longer the universal mind of God, but rather the mind of Jesus Christ united to the bread and wine. Through this new metaphysics, Leibniz thinks he can demonstrate that transubstantiation, real presence, and ubiquity are different aspects of the very same thing. He hopes to thereby resolve theological controversies among the Christian denominations regarding the doctrine of the Eucharist, which is a vital component for a matter close to Leibniz's heart: the reunion of the churches.

**Keywords:** Eucharist, transubstantiation, real presence, substantial form, Cartesianism, ubiquity

**RÉSUMÉ :** La préoccupation constante de Leibniz pour la doctrine eucharistique catholique a toujours été un énorme catalyseur de son développement philosophique. Dans cet essai, j'examinerai la position de Leibniz vis-à-vis de l'Eucharistie dans le cadre de son écrit précoce *De Transsubstantiatione* de 1668. D'une part, Leibniz y travaille sur une nouvelle métaphysique qui réconcilie le mécanisme cartésien avec les formes substantielles de la scolastique dans le but de défendre le mystère de l'Eucharistie contre des objections. Puisque le *principium actionis* ne peut être dans le corps, mais seulement dans l'esprit, et que le corps donc doit être un accident, la *conversio substantialis* dont parle la doctrine catholique de l'Eucharistie doit être comprise comme un changement concernant l'esprit qui confère l'unité substantielle aux corps des dons eucharistiques. Ce n'est plus l'esprit universel de Dieu, mais plutôt l'esprit de Jésus-Christ qui

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leur confère son unité substantielle après la consécration. D'autre part, Leibniz pense pouvoir montrer, par cette nouvelle métaphysique, que la transsubstantiation, la présence réelle et l'ubiquité sont de différents aspects d'une seule et même chose, dissolvant ainsi les querelles théologiques entre les confessions au sujet de la doctrine de la Cène et de l'Eucharistie. C'est ainsi qu'il s'approche d'un pas décisif du projet de la réunification des Églises.

*Mots-clés* : Eucharistie, transsubstantiation, présence réelle, forme substantielle, cartésianisme, ubiquité

**KURZFASSUNG:** Die lebenslange Beschäftigung Leibnizens mit der katholischen Eucharistielehre stellte stets einen enormen Katalysator seiner philosophischen Entwicklung dar. In diesem Aufsatz werde ich Leibniz' Auseinandersetzung mit der Eucharistie im Umkreis seiner frühen Schrift *De Transsubstantiatione* von 1668 untersuchen. Leibniz arbeitet hier einerseits an einer neuen Metaphysik, die den cartesianischen Mechanismus mit den substanzialen Formen der Scholastik versöhnt, mit dem Ziel, das christliche Geheimnis der Eucharistie gegen Anfragen zu verteidigen. Weil das *principium actionis* nicht in den Körpern, sondern bloß im Geist sein kann, der Körper also Akzidenz sein muss, muss die *conversio substantialis*, von der die katholische Lehre der Eucharistie spricht, als Wechsel hinsichtlich des den Körpern der eucharistischen Gaben ihre substanziale Einheit verleihenden Geistes verstanden werden. Es ist nicht mehr der universelle Geist Gottes, sondern vielmehr der Geist Jesu Christi, der ihnen nach der Konsekration ihre substanziale Einheit verleiht. Andererseits meint Leibniz durch diese neue Metaphysik zeigen zu können, dass Transsubstantiation, Realpräsenz und Ubiquität verschiedene Aspekte ein und derselben Sache sind, sich dadurch die kontroverstheologischen Streitigkeiten zwischen den Konfessionen hinsichtlich der Abendmahls- und Eucharistielehre auflösen und er somit dem Projekt der Reunion der Kirchen einen entscheidenden Schritt nähergekommen ist.

*Schlagworte:* Eucharistie, Transsubstantiation, Realpräsenz, substanziale Form, Cartesianismus, Ubiquität

## I. Introduction

Ever since Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz first got in touch with baron Johann Christian von Boineburg (1622–1672), a convert to the Catholic faith, in the end of 1667, at the age of just 21, the Lutheran Leibniz had brooded over the Christian mystery of the Eucharist and the Real Presence of Christ. But Leibniz dealt with this particular Catholic doctrine not only at the beginning of his philosophical development. Throughout his life he had a deep interest in demonstrating that his metaphysics was compatible with it<sup>1</sup>. Even at

1 See E. Michaud, "Leibniz et l'eucharistie", in: *Revue internationale de théologie* 40 (1902), pp. 693–712; D. C. Fouke, "Metaphysics and the Eucharist in the Early Leibniz", in: *Studia Leibnitiana* 24/2 (1992), pp. 145–159; D. Grumett, "Blondel, Modern Catholic Theology and the Leibnizian Eucharistic Bond", in: *Modern Theology* 23/4 (2007), pp. 561–577; I. Backus, "Leibniz's Conceptions of the Eucharist 1668–1699 and His Use of 16<sup>th</sup> Century Sources in the Religious Negotiations between Hanover and Brandenburg",

the end of his life, between 1706 and 1716, in the correspondences with Bartholomew Des Bosses, S.J. (1668–1738), he defended the compatibility of his late substance metaphysics and the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist<sup>2</sup>.

## II. Leibniz between Apologetics and Ecumenism

But why did the young Lutheran ponder about this Catholic doctrine? On the one hand, the Christian mysteries had been questioned since the 17<sup>th</sup> century by a spreading atheistic philosophy. With regard to the truths of revelation – the Trinity, the Incarnation, the resurrection of the bodies and the Eucharist – Leibniz tried to show their possibility which was denied by Socinians, Spinozists and Cartesians. Motivated by those theological controversies, the young Leibniz designed an extremely innovative metaphysical framework to establish effective apologetics against those “innovators”<sup>3</sup>. For Leibniz, their positions are not only contrary to the faith, leading toward atheism, but also contrary to reason and therefore an attack on the *Respublica Christiana*, that society which, for Leibniz, is surpassed in reason by no other<sup>4</sup>. With regard to the Eucharist, those innovators raise the following difficulties: For the Socinians, the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist was profoundly unbiblical and, furthermore, contrary to reason, and hence, logically impossible. For the Spinozists, it was epistemically inaccessible and therefore better to keep silent about this Christian mystery. And finally, Cartesian mechanism made it physically impossible. So, in order to demonstrate the mere possibility, but also the actuality of this particular Christian mystery, Leibniz demonstrated that all these objections could be dismissed as self-contradictory<sup>5</sup>. In short, Leibniz pondered about the Eucharist, as part of his apologetics of the Christian faith against those challenges.

Moreover, Leibniz was concerned with the Eucharist because he hoped thereby to show that the theological positions of Catholicism and Lutheranism regarding the Eucharist and the Lord’s Supper were in fact identical in crucial respects and do not divide the Christian churches. Consequently, the preoccupation with the Eucharist is part of his commitment to the project of reuniting the Christian churches, more precisely to the early project of reuniting the Catholic and Lutheran churches.

in: *Leibniz und die Ökumene* (= *Studia Leibnitiana, Sonderhefte* 41), ed. by W. Li, H. Poser, and H. Rudolph, Stuttgart 2013, pp. 171–201; I. Backus, *Leibniz. Protestant Theologian*, Oxford 2016, pp. 9–54.

2 Cf. GP II, 388–435; unless otherwise indicated, primary texts are translated by the author.

3 A VI, 4 C, N. 413, p. 2336: “novatores”.

4 Cf. A VI, 4 C, N. 410, pp. 2323–2327.

5 See in detail M. R. Antognazza, “Die Polemik des jungen Leibniz gegen die Sozinianer”, in: *Leibniz und Europa. VI. Internationaler Leibniz-Kongress, Hannover 18. bis 23. Juli 1994*, 2 vols., Hannover 1994–1995, vol. 1, Hannover 1994, pp. 17–24; Z. Ogonowski, “Leibniz und die Sozinianer”, in: *Theatrum Europaeum. Festschrift für Elida Maria Szarota*, ed. by R. Brinkmann, K.-H. Habersetzer et al., Munich 1982, pp. 385–408; U. Goldenbaum, “Spinoza’s Parrot, Socinian Syllogism, and Leibniz’s Metaphysics. Leibniz’s Three Strategies of Defending Christian Mysteries”, in: *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 76/4 (2002), pp. 551–574; M. R. Antognazza, *Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation. Reason and Revelation in the Seventeenth Century*, New Haven et al. 2007; M. R. Antognazza, *Leibniz. An Intellectual Biography*, Cambridge 2009, pp. 30–59.

From the late 1660s, Leibniz was devoted to the project of church reunion<sup>6</sup>. Until the 1670s, he was focused on overcoming the schism between the Lutheran and Roman Catholic church, but his commitment remained in the realm of theoretical discussions. Only after disappointments and setbacks did Leibniz turn in later years to the union of the various Protestant denominations – on this occasion, quite concretely through discussions and negotiations<sup>7</sup>. The reasons for his commitment to church reunion are numerous. When the Thirty Years' War ended, Leibniz was only two years old, but the devastating consequences of this religious conflict were apparent to him as a grown man. In order to avoid similar conflicts in the future and to increase the welfare of the human race, the reunion of Christendom was necessary. Thus, in the fall of 1679, Leibniz wrote to Duke Johann Friedrich of Hanover: “Nothing is more useful for the common good than the authority of a universal church, which forms the body of *all* Christians, united by the bond of charity”<sup>8</sup>. Moreover, the Holy Roman Empire faced a growing threat from the West through the aggressive foreign policy of Louis XIV (1638–1715), which escalated into a war between France and the Empire in the Nine Years' War (1688–1697). Especially compared to France's strong confessional unity, the disrupted Holy Roman Empire was weakened. Consequently, a reunion of the churches would have meant a strengthening of the unity of the Empire and thus an actual benefit in the conflict with France. Leibniz, moreover, was convinced that the top priority should not be the theological controversies among the Christian denominations, but rather the deep conflict with and ultimately the defense against atheism<sup>9</sup>. For this reason, all Christians, despite denominational antagonisms, should be united and together seek to close ranks against the atheism of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Leibniz's time at the court of the Bishop and Elector of Mainz, Johann Philipp von Schönborn (1605–1673), between 1668 and 1672, also did its part: Here he experienced an environment that was Catholic in character, but with far-reaching confessional coexistence, which shaped Leibniz's irenic thinking<sup>10</sup>. On my view, however, the most important reason for Leibniz's commitment to the project of church reunion lies in one of Leibniz's fundamental metaphysical principle: the *Principle of Universal Harmony*,

6 See P. Eisenkopf, *Leibniz und die Einigung der Christenheit. Überlegungen zur Reunion der evangelischen und katholischen Kirche* (= *Beiträge zur ökumenischen Theologie* 11), Munich et al. 1975; R. Schenk, “Leibniz und die Zukunft der Ökumene”, in: *Leibniz und die Gegenwart*, ed. by F. Hermanni and H. Breger, Munich 2002, pp. 13–25; Li/Poser/Rudolph, *Leibniz und die Ökumene* (see note 1).

7 Later, however, his interest expanded also to include the Orthodox Church and, through the House of Hanover's closer ties with the English throne, the Anglican Church as well. See esp. C. Rösler, “*Negotium irenicum* – Versuche eines innerprotestantischen Ausgleichs von G. W. Leibniz und D. E. Jablonski”, in: Li/Poser/Rudolph, *Leibniz und die Ökumene* (see note 1), pp. 137–158; W. Li, “‘Le point de Ps. 10.14.21.32.’ – Leibnizens Projekt eines Weltkonzils unter Peter dem Großen”, in: Li/Poser/Rudolph, *Leibniz und die Ökumene* (see note 1), pp. 87–94.

8 “[...] rien est plus utile au bien general que l'autorité de l'Eglise universelle qui forme un corps de tous les Chrétiens unis par les liens de la charité [...]”, A II, 1, N. 213, p. 753 (my emphasis).

9 Cf. A I, 8, N. 378 and N. 388, pp. 605–606 and 616; A IV, I, N. 25 and 26, pp. 489–493.

10 Cf. I. Dingel, “Leibniz und seine Überlegungen zu einer kirchlichen Reunion”, in: *Leibniz in Mainz. Europäische Dimensionen der Mainzer Wirkungsperiode* (= *Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte, Mainz. Beihefte* 126: *Abt. Abendländische Religionsgeschichte*), ed. by I. Dingel, M. Kempe, and W. Li, Göttingen 2019, pp. 93–104, at pp. 96–97.

which Leibniz understood as unity in multiplicity<sup>11</sup>. Because of this fundamental metaphysical principle, divided Christendom was an unacceptable fact.

Like Georg Calixtus (1539–1618), Leibniz was convinced that the vast majority of controversial theological issues were based on misunderstandings or polemics. Thus, in a letter to Ernst von Hessen-Rheinfels (1623–1693) from 1687, he reproaches the controversial theological polemics of his time by saying:

that one can say that [...] [they are] written more for one's own satisfaction and for the sake of one's own applause, by blindsiding the opponent, instead of writing in a way that could convince and enlighten at the same time<sup>12</sup>.

This claim also applies to the controversies concerning the doctrine of the Eucharist. Leibniz was convinced that the Real Presence – as it had been held by his own denomination and the Catholic Church, and the doctrine of transubstantiation, as it had been taught by the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), the Second Council of Lyons (1274), and the Council of Trent (1545–1563) – were two sides of the same coin, and thus the controversies concerning the presence of Christ in the Eucharist and the Lord's Supper had no *fundamentum in re*. Thus, his preoccupation with the Eucharist was connected with the hope of putting an end to the controversy regarding this theological issue between Lutherans and Catholics, and thus to help bring about reunion.

### III. Leibniz and the Cartesian Philosophy

After Leibniz had turned down a professorship in Altdorf in 1667 – apparently, he was aspiring to something greater than a comfortable scholarly career, but was pursuing far-reaching plans – and after stays in Nuremberg and Frankfurt, in 1668 he found employment at the *Revisionsgericht* of the archbishop Johann Philipp von Schönborn in Mainz. Here he was entrusted with the reform of the *corpus iuris*. His friendship with Johann Christian von Boineburg, who had converted to Catholicism in 1653, was to have a particularly important influence during these years. Through him, Leibniz was introduced to a circle of intellectuals that included several former Protestant scholars who had converted to Catholicism, such as Peter and Adrian van Walenburch and Duke Ernst von Hessen-Rheinfels. It was through this circle that Leibniz first came into touch with the theological and philosophical debates that created tension in Catholic Europe, including, in particular, the controversies surrounding the relationship between the philosophy of Descartes (1596–1650) and the Christian mysteries<sup>13</sup>.

11 Cf. A VI, 1, N. 12, pp. 484–485. See also C. Mercer, *Leibniz's Metaphysics. Its Origins and Development*, Cambridge 2001, pp. 64–67.

12 “[...] qu'on peut dire que la plupart des livres de controverse ont esté faits plus tost pour se satisfaire et pour attirer les applaudissemens de son parti, en surprenant son adversaire, que d'une maniere propre à le convaincre et à l'éclairer en meme temps”, A I, 5, N. 6, p. 11.

13 On Leibniz's culture shock in Mainz, see esp. Dingel, “Leibniz und seine Überlegungen zu einer kirchlichen Reunion” (see note 10), pp. 93–104; U. Goldenbaum, “Ein Lutheraner am katholischen Kurmain-

### III.1 Tension between Descartes' Philosophy and the Catholic Doctrine of the Eucharist

What was the subject of the controversy? Antoine Arnauld (1612–1694), a Doctor of Theology at the Sorbonne, had already touched on a sore spot in the Fourth Set of Objections to Descartes' *Meditations*:

But what I see as likely to give the greatest offence to theologians is that according to the author's doctrines [Descartes', X. M. P.] it seems that the Church's teaching concerning the sacred mysteries of the Eucharist cannot remain completely intact. We believe on faith that the substance of the bread is taken away from the bread of the Eucharist and only the accidents remain. These are extension, shape, colour, smell, taste and other qualities perceived by the senses<sup>4</sup>.

The Sixths Set of Objections to the *Meditations*, a compilation of various theologians and philosophers and collected by Marin Mersenne, O.M. (1588–1648), specifies the problem:

Nor do we grasp your [Descartes', X. M. P.] assertion that there are no real accidents belonging to any body or substance – accidents which could by divine power exist apart from any subject, and which do really exist in the sacrament of the altar<sup>5</sup>.

As in the case of Galileo<sup>6</sup>, the problem here concerns the compatibility of metaphysics, physics and ecclesiastical dogma. This was a considerable problem in the eyes of Descartes and many of his contemporaries. Many theologians and clergymen among Descartes' students – above all Denis Mesland, S.J. (1615–1672) – spent a lot of effort to resolve the alleged points of friction<sup>7</sup>. But what actually was the problem?

Both replies to the *Meditations* point out that the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist has unavoidable ontological implications<sup>8</sup>: It presupposes that there are *real accidents*,

zischen Hof", in: Li/Poser/Rudolph, *Leibniz und die Ökumene* (see note 1), pp. 17–32; U. Goldenbaum, "Transubstantiation, Physics and Philosophy at the Time of the Catholic Demonstrations", in: *The Young Leibniz and His Philosophy (1646–1676)*, ed. by S. Brown, Dordrecht/Boston/London 1999, pp. 79–102.

14 "Verum, quod maxime Theologis offendiculo fore praevideo, est quod, secundum Viri C. dogmata, salva et integra remanere non posse videantur, quae de sacrosanctis altaris mysteriis docet Ecclesia. Fide enim credimus, ablata ab Eucharistico pane panis substantia, sola illic accidentia remanere: ea autem sunt extensio, figura, color, odor, sapor, aliaque sensiles qualitates", *Œuvres de Descartes*, éd. par C. Adam et P. Tannery, 13 vols., Paris 1897–1913, nouvelle édition Paris 1964–1976 (hereafter: AT), vol. VII, p. 217; translation is from *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, transl. by J. Cottingham, R. Stoothoff, D. Murdoch and A. Kenny, 3 vols., Cambridge 1984–1991 (hereafter: CSM), vol. II, pp. 152–153.

15 "Necdum etiam capimus nulla esse cujuslibet corporis aut substantiae accidentia realia, quae virtute divina possint absque ullo subjecto existere, reque vera existant in Altaris Sacramento, uti asseris", AT VII, 417; translation is from CSM II, 281.

16 In Galileo's case, it was not first and foremost his cosmology but rather his atomism and its consequences for the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist that brought him into conflict with the Church authorities. See esp. P. Redondi, *Galilei. Der Ketzer*, Frankfurt a. M. 1989, pp. 206–228.

17 See in detail S. M. Nadler, *The Philosopher, the Priest, and the Painter. A Portrait of Descartes*, Princeton et al. 2013, pp. 143–174.

18 However, the Fathers of the Council of Trent were not committed to any particular philosophical school and its technical terminology. See E. Gutwenger, "Substanz und Akzidenz in der Eucharistielehre", in: *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 83/3 (1961), pp. 257–306.

that is, accidents that can exist without inhering in a substance and are, so to speak, ontologically free-floating<sup>19</sup>. Now why did the question of real accidents concern the doctrine of the Eucharist? The doctrine of transubstantiation, which was identified at the Council of Trent as the doctrine most adequately and appropriately (*convenienter et proprie*<sup>20</sup>) expressing the conversion of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, teaches that the accidents of bread and wine (i. e., their taste, texture, odor, etc.) are preserved after consecration without inhering in the substance of bread and wine, since after the consecration the original substances of bread and wine do not exist anymore. However, since the substances of the Body and Blood of Christ are under no circumstances suitable for the taste, consistency, smell, etc. of bread and wine to inhere in them<sup>21</sup>, they must be able to exist as accidents without inhering in any substance at all. *Real accidents must therefore be possible*<sup>22</sup>.

Descartes strives to show that he never has denied the existence of real accidents<sup>23</sup> – these passages were probably meant to prevent the indexing of the work, though, without success. As is well known, the *Meditations* of 1650 were put on the *Index librorum prohibitorum* in 1661, along with all further writings in French and Latin in 1663 *donec corrigantur*. Nevertheless, Descartes expresses his rejection of real accidents unmistakably in central passages<sup>24</sup>:

- 19 This is clearly evident in the Council of Trent's rejection of John Wycliffe's (1328–1384) teaching, which explicitly denied the existence of real accretions with regard to the Eucharist. Thus, the Council states: "Quia si talis quantitas, quae fuit quantitas panis, non manet sine subjecto in sacramento altaris, erit tunc vel in corpore Christi, vel in pane, vel in utroque, vel in aere circumstanti" (H. von der Hardt, *Magnum oecumenicum Constantiense concilium de universali ecclesiae reformatione, unione et fide*, 6 vols., Frankfurt/Leipzig 1697–1700, vol. III: *De religionis et fidei momentis*, Frankfurt/Leipzig 1698, pars XII, col. 170). Because all four options are eliminated, the accidents of bread and wine must be allowed to continue as real accidents, without being inherent in a substance.
- 20 H. Denzinger, *Kompendium der Glaubensbekenntnisse und kirchlichen Lehrentscheidungen. Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, ed. by P. Hünermann, Freiburg i. Br. 4<sup>o</sup>2005, no. 1642.
- 21 Cf. S. Thomae Aquinatis Doctoris Angelici *Summa theologiae*, pars I, quaest. 77, art. 1.
- 22 See also Leibniz's "De realitate accidentium" (A VI, 4 A, N. 994, pp. 994–996) from 1688. The question about the ontological status of real accidents has been answered very differently in medieval scholasticism: While Dietrich of Freiberg (1250–1310) rejects real accidents altogether, Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) assumes that accidents depend causally on their subject for their existence. Now, because God as *causa prima* can produce all the effects of the secondary causes, he alone is able to maintain accidents in existence through his causation, even if their original causative subject no longer exists. John Duns Scotus (1265/1266–1308) argues for an ontologically robust mode of existence of accidents, because accidents are the principles by which we recognize a substance at all. However, it is unreasonable to claim that something is a principle but does not exist, cf. R. Pasnau, *Metaphysical Themes (1274–1671)*, Oxford 2011, pp. 179–199.
- 23 Cf. AT VII, 248.
- 24 In the meantime, it has been proven that, among other things, the momentous consequences of Descartes' metaphysics and physics for the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist constituted one of the main reasons for the indexing of Descartes' writings. See in detail J.-R. Armogathe and V. Carraud, "The First Condemnation of Descartes' *Œuvres*. Some Unpublished Documents from the Vatican Archives", in: *Oxford Studies in Early Modern Philosophy* 1 (2005), pp. 67–110.

[I]t is completely contradictory that there should be real accidents, since whatever is real can exist separately from any other subject; yet anything that can exist separately in this way is a substance, not an accident<sup>25</sup>.

[I]t is certain that a thought cannot exist without a thing that is thinking; and in general no act or accident can exist without a substance for it to belong to<sup>26</sup>.

If accidents – which Descartes identifies with modes<sup>27</sup> – can never exist without substances in which they inhere, the existence of real accidents is ruled out<sup>28</sup>. Just as the particular *thought of a black swan* cannot exist without a thinking substance, neither can a mode, like a specific taste, exist without a substance in which the mode inheres. The rejection of real accidents follows directly from Descartes' metaphysics, for his dualism divides the world into two distinct domains: thinking and extended substances, which in a certain sense exist *per se*<sup>29</sup>, while everything else exists merely *per aliud*. The attribute of a thinking substance is thinking, that of extended substances is extension. Between a substance and its attribute there is merely a *distinctio rationis*, thus it is a difference that has no *fundamentum in re*, but merely *in mente*<sup>30</sup>. Substances and their attributes are thus identical and not merely conceptually distinct. Drawing on Gottlob Frege, we can say that substances and their attributes are extensionally identical, but intensionally different, just as morning and evening star differ merely intensionally, but not extensionally, yet both are identical with the planet Venus. The acts of thought or will (*cogitationes, volitiones*) are modes of a thinking substance, while the particular form, motion, position, etc., is a mode of an extended substance. They are *particular modes of existence* of an attribute of a substance. Two basic metaphysical insights follow from what already has been said: On the one hand, what can exist separably from a substance must itself be substance and not accident, which is why the notion of a real accident is incompatible with Descartes' metaphysics. On the other hand, two different substances cannot share the same mode, because they cannot share the same particular mode of existence without being identical to each other.

25 “Ac deinde, omnino repugnat dari accidentia realia, quia quicquid est reale, potest separatim ab omni alio subjecto existere; quicquid autem ita separatim potest existere, est substantia, non accidens”, AT VII, 434; translation is from CSM II, 293.

26 “[...] certum est cogitationem non posse esse sine re cogitante, nec omnino ullum actum, sive ullum accidens, sine substantia cui insit”, AT VII, 175–176; translation is from CSM II, 124.

27 The identification of mode and accident occurs in the third meditation in the answers to the third set of objections. See AT VII, 40. In the *Principia Philosophiae* written three years later, in 1644, Descartes distinguishes between modes and accidents, cf. AT VIII.1, 27–28.

28 See in detail S. M. Nadler, “Arnauld, Descartes, and Transubstantiation. Reconciling Cartesian Metaphysics and Real Presence”, in: *Journal of the History of Ideas* 49/2 (1988), pp. 229–246.

29 In the *Principia Philosophiae* Descartes says that only the divine substance is substance in this strict sense, because only it exists *per se* due to the existence-essence-identity. Thus, the extended and mental substances are not substances insofar as they do not have the capacity to exist by themselves and thus could not exist without God. Rather they are substances insofar as they exist *per se* apart from their ontological dependence on God, cf. AT VIII.1, 24.

30 Cf. AT VIII.1, 30–31.

These metaphysical insights produce at least the following two problems regarding the compatibility of Cartesian metaphysics and the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist:

- (1) It is impossible for a mode not to inhere in a substance.
- (2) Modes are accidents.
- (3) It is impossible for an accident not to inhere in a substance.
- (4) If it is impossible for an accident not to inhere in a substance, then real accidents are impossible.
- (5) Real accidents are impossible. [modus ponens (3) and (4)]
- (6) The Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist presupposes the possibility of real accidents.
- (7) If the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist presupposes the possibility of real accidents, then Descartes' metaphysics is incompatible with it.
- (8) Descartes' metaphysics is incompatible with the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist. [modus ponens (6) and (7)]
  
- (9) The body of Christ is an extended substance.
- (10) The modes of an extended substance are shape, size and movement.
- (11) If  $x$  and  $y$  are physical substances, then  $x$  and  $y$  must be distinguishable on the basis of their modes.
- (12) Bread and the Body of Christ are not distinguishable on the basis of their modes.
- (13) Therefore, the bread and the Body of Christ are identical. [modus tollens (11) and (12)]
- (14) If bread and the Body of Christ are identical, a *conversio substantialis* is excluded within Descartes' metaphysics.
- (15) A *conversio substantialis* within Descartes' metaphysics is excluded. [modus ponens (13) and (14)]
- (16) The Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist teaches a *conversio substantialis*.
- (17) Descartes' metaphysics is incompatible with the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist. [modus tollens (14) and (16)]

### III.2 Leibniz's Encounter with Cartesian Philosophy in the *Confessio naturae contra atheistas* and the Correspondence with Thomasius

In the *Confessio naturae contra atheistas*, published in 1668 without Leibniz's consent, he says:

At the beginning, I willingly conceded that we must agree with those contemporary philosophers, renewing Democritus and Epicurus, whom Robert Boyle appropriately calls corpuscular philosophers, such as Galileo, Bacon, Gassendi, Descartes, Hobbes, and Digby, who maintain that in explaining the phenomena of the bodies we must not needlessly fall back on God or any other disembodied being, form, or quality [...] but rather that, so far as it is possible,

everything must be deduced from the nature of the body and its primary properties, namely size, shape, and motion. But what if I could show that the origin of these very primary qualities is not itself to be found in the nature of the body? Then, I hope, these naturalists [i. e., corpuscular philosophers, X. M. P.] will admit that the body is not self-sufficient and cannot subsist without a non-corporeal principle<sup>31</sup>.

According to Leibniz, the mechanical philosophy of the Cartesians is characterized by the fact that it no longer explains natural phenomena by recourse to God or substantial forms, but by the nature of the bodies, i. e. their *esse in spatio* and the qualities of size, movement etc.<sup>32</sup>. Leibniz is also committed to this explanatory parsimony, but he points out that the origin of some qualities cannot be found in the nature of the body itself and, even more serious, if the body therefore cannot subsist self-sufficiently, it cannot be called a substance<sup>33</sup>. Thus, Leibniz writes in a letter to Antoine Arnauld of March 1690: “A body is [...] in the proper sense of the word no substance”<sup>34</sup>. In the letters to his former teacher in Leipzig, Jakob Thomasius (1622–1684), Leibniz argues that the motion of a body cannot follow from its nature, nor from its matter, shape and other qualities. Thus, he writes to Thomasius in the fall of 1668:

Since the body is nothing else than matter and form [*figura*] and the cause for the movement cannot be matter and form, the cause of the movement must necessarily be found outside of the body. And since there is nothing outside the body except a thinking thing – a spirit – this is the cause of motion. But the spirit, which governs the universe, is God<sup>35</sup>.

“Since in a body there is not the origin of its motion”<sup>36</sup> and since “a body is defined as that which exists in space”<sup>37</sup>, it follows that the motion of the body cannot be self-derived. No body can be a substance in the sense of self-sufficient subsistence.

31 “Ac principio hodiernis philosophis, *Democriti et Epicuri* resuscitatoribus, quos *Robertus de Boyle* corporales non inepte appellat, ut *Galilaeo, Bacono, Gassendo, Cartesio, Hobbesio, Digbaeo* facile condescendendo assensus sum, in reddendis corporalium Phaenomenorum rationibus neque ad Deum, neque aliam quamcunque rem, formamque aut qualitatem incorporealem sine necessitate confugiendum esse [...] sed omnia quoad ejus fieri possit, ex natura corporis, primisque ejus qualitatibus: Magnitudine, Figura et Motu deducenda esse. Sed quid si demonstrarem, ne harum quidem primarum qualitatum originem in natura corporis reperiri posse? Tum vero fatebuntur, ut spero, naturalistae nostri, corpora sibi non sufficere nec sine principio incorporeo subsistere posse”, A VI, 1, N. 13, pp. 489–490.

32 For the sake of fairness, it should be mentioned that in the mid-1670s Leibniz wrote in a letter to Simon Foucher (1644–1696) that, in the 1660s, he had known Descartes’ writings only insufficiently, cf. A II, 1, N. 120, pp. 388–389. Leibniz was able to intensify his study of Descartes’ writings thanks to Boineburg’s library, which he visited frequently since his time in Mainz and purchased new acquisitions together with Boineburg.

33 These ideas are further developed in *Theoria motus abstracti* and *Hypothesis physica nova*, which were submitted to the *French Academy of Sciences* and the *Royal Society of London* in 1671.

34 “[...] les corps ne sont [...] pas des substances à proprement parler”, A II, 2, N. 78, p. 311 (GP II, 135).

35 “Cum enim corpus nihil aliud sit, quam materia et figura, et vero nec ex materia nec figura intelligi possit causa motus: necesse est, causam motus esse extra corpus. Cumque extra corpus nihil sit cogitabile, praeter ens cogitans, seu mentem, erit mens causa motus. Mens autem universi rectrix est Deus”, A II, 1, N. 10, p. 19.

36 “[...] quod in corporibus nulla sit origo motus”, A VI, 1, N. 14, p. 494.

37 “Definitio autem corporis est spatio inexistere”, A VI, 1, N. 13, p. 490.

For if they say that this body moves from eternity, no reason can be given why it should not rather have rested from eternity, since time, even if it is infinite, cannot be the cause of motion. But if they say that this body is moved by another body which is adjacent to it and which moves, and this body again is moved by another one, and so on *ad infinitum*, they have not yet given any reason for the first and the second and the third or any body at all to be moved [...] <sup>38</sup>.

If the movement of a body does not follow from the nature of that very body, it must follow from something else. It is obviously not necessary for a body to move at all nor with a specific motion. So, the *principium actionis* has to be found outside the body. Because there is only thinking and extension on the Cartesian picture, the *principium actionis* must be something mental, i. e., a mind <sup>39</sup>.

#### IV. Leibniz's Eucharistic Metaphysics in *On Transubstantiation*

*De Transsubstantiatione*<sup>40</sup>, dated 1668<sup>41</sup> and first published in the 1930 *Akademieausgabe*, is part of a large-scale program, namely, the *Demonstrationes catholicae*<sup>42</sup>. "In short, it represented the most rounded early version of Leibniz's life-long, all-encompassing intellectual programme"<sup>43</sup>. Even though only a few texts were completed for this project, we nevertheless have the planned overall structure of the comprehensive project. It was to consist of a total of five parts: (1) In the *Prolegomena*, consisting of (1.1) *de Ente*, (1.2) *de Mente*, (1.3) *de Spatio*, (1.4) *de Corpore*, and (1.5) *de Civitate*, Leibniz endeavored to develop a new metaphysical framework. Afterwards he intended to work on the (2) *Demonstratio existentiae Dei*, (3) *Demonstratio immortalitatis animae & incorporalitatis*, (4) *Demonstratio possibilitatis mysteriorum fidei Christianae* and (5) *Demonstratio auctoritatis Ecclesiae Catholicae. Demonstratio auctoritatis Scripturae*. Not only was the whole of philosophy to be treated as prolegomena (metaphysics (1.1), logic (1.2), mathematics (1.3), physics (1.4) and moral philosophy (1.5)), but subsequently the Christian faith was to be defended. Even if this program could not be completed, Leibniz's entire oeuvre can be interpreted as the realization of the comprehensive program of the *Catholic Demonstrations*, namely,

38 "Nam si dicunt corpus propositum motum esse ab aeterno, non apparet cur non potius quieverit ab aeterno, tempus enim, etiam infinitum, causa motus intelligi non potest. Sin dicunt corpus propositum moveri ab alio contiguo et moto; idque iterum ab alio, sine fine; nihilo magis rationem reddiderunt, cur moveatur primum, et secundum et tertium vel quotumcunque, quamdiu non reddidere rationem cur moveatur sequens [...]"; A VI, 1, N. 13, p. 491.

39 See in detail D. Garber, "Motion and Metaphysics in the Young Leibniz", in: *Leibniz. Critical and Interpretive Essays*, ed. by M. Hooker, Minneapolis 1982, pp. 160–184.

40 A VI, 1, N. 15, pp. 508–510.

41 Cf. A VI, 1, N. 15, p. 508; A VI, 2, N. 15, p. 572.

42 On the *Catholic Demonstrations* see esp. H. Schepers, *Leibniz. Wege zu seiner reifen Metaphysik*, Berlin 2014, pp. 82–94.

43 Antognazza, *Leibniz. An Intellectual Biography* (see note 5), p. 91.

that faith and religion, could provide the binding link between peoples, and that reason could provide apologetics of the Christian faith, and furthermore, reconciliation of the Christian denominations and the conviction of the misbelievers of the truth of Christianity, in which, natural religion had completely been realized<sup>44</sup>.

In *On Transubstantiation*, Leibniz now applies to the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist his new philosophy, which he had developed in the disputes with Cartesian mechanical philosophy in the correspondences with Thomasius in the late 1660s and in the *Confessio naturae contra atheistas*. Because a body cannot be its own *principium actionis*, it cannot be a substance. But what is not substance must be an accident, therefore the body must be an accident. Only in unity with a concurring mind [*mens concurrens*<sup>45</sup>] or *ratio* is a body a substance<sup>46</sup>. Thus Leibniz can say in the *Demonstrations* that “nothing is without *ratio*”<sup>47</sup>. And in *On Transubstantiation* he points out: “Substance is unity with a mind”<sup>48</sup>. In the case of a human body, it is a concurring human mind that forms a substantial unity with the body. In the case of inanimate bodies, as in the case of the bread and wine of the eucharistic species, the *principium actionis* is a universal mind, which Leibniz identifies with God. The correspondences of the 1660s, the *Confessio*, and the *Demonstrations* confirm a still-young Leibniz absorbed in Cartesian mechanical philosophy, but who finds its claim to be unjustified and insufficient. Leibniz began to reconcile Cartesian mechanical philosophy with scholastic Aristotelianism, along with its substantial forms<sup>49</sup>. Moreover, at this stage of his life he takes pains to “baptize” Cartesian mechanism and to argue “that not only is the mechanical philosophy consistent with theology, but that mechanical philosophy *demands* that there is a God”<sup>50</sup>. As a universal mind, God is in fact the *principium actionis* of all inanimate bodies.

If it is a concurring mind united with a body which makes a body a substance, then every change of the concurring mind means a transubstantiation, a substantial change. If the identity of the concurring mind which unites a body changes, the substance is no longer the same. Leibniz’s synthesis of his new philosophy and the doctrine of the Eucharist in *On Transubstantiation* can be summarized as follows<sup>51</sup>:

- (18) A substance is a being subsisting in itself.
- (19) Subsist =<sub>df</sub> having a principle of action and motion [*principium actionis*] in itself.
- (20) If a body is a substance, it must have its principle of action and motion in itself.

44 Schepers, *Leibniz. Wege zu seiner reifen Metaphysik* (see note 42), p. 93.

45 A VI, 1, N. 15<sub>2</sub>, p. 509.

46 Cf. *ibid.*

47 “[N]ihil sit sine ratione”, A VI, 1, p. 494.

48 “Substantia est unio cum mente”, A VI, 1, N. 15<sub>2</sub>, p. 509 (my emphasis).

49 See in detail A. Nita (ed.), *Leibniz’s Metaphysics and Adoption of Substantial Forms. Between Continuity and Transformation*, Dordrecht 2015; M. Fichant, “Mécánisme et métaphysique. Le rétablissement des formes substantielles (1679)”, in: M. Fichant, *Science et métaphysique dans Descartes et Leibniz*, Paris 1998, pp. 163–204.

50 D. Garber, *Leibniz. Body, Substance, Monad*, Oxford 2009, p. 11.

51 Cf. A VI, 1, N. 15<sub>2</sub>, pp. 508–509.

- (21) No body separated from a concurring mind can have a principle of action and motion in itself.
- (22) Therefore, no body, when separated from its concurring mind, can be a substance. [modus tollens (20) and (21)]
- (23) Everything that is not a substance is an accident.
- (24) Therefore, when a body is separated from its concurring mind, it must be an accident. [universal elimination (23)]
- (25) Substance is unity with a concurring mind.
- (26) The substance of a human body is the unity with a concurring human mind.
- (27) The substance of a non-human body is the unity with the universal mind = God's mind.
- (28) A substance is transubstantiated by changing the unity with a concurring mind.
- (29) After consecration, it is no longer God's mind that gives bread and wine their substantial unity, but the mind of Christ. Therefore, bread and wine, as non-human bodies, are converted into the Body of Christ through a change of the concurring mind.

Because the mind of Christ<sup>52</sup> concurs with the bodies of bread and wine after consecration, and not the universal mind, Christ's mind becomes the *principium actionis* of these bodies. This new concurring mind gives bread and wine a new substantial unity. A *conversio substantialis* has happened<sup>53</sup>. In the *Scholia* to *On Transubstantiation* Leibniz therefore summarizes: "I define transubstantiation more closely as the change of the substantial form"<sup>54</sup>, the latter for sure no longer understood in the Aristotelian-scholastic sense but rather in a new way: The substantial form as a mental point<sup>55</sup>.

Leibniz's early understanding of transubstantiation undoubtedly has immense significance for his project of the reunion between Catholics and Lutherans. In *De demonstratione possibilitatis mysteriorum eucharistiae*, written in 1671, Leibniz points out:

- 52 If it follows from dithelitism that if Christ possessed two wills, he also possessed two intellects, and if intellect and mind are identical, then the question arises whether it is the human or the divine mind of Christ concurs with bread and wine after consecration.
- 53 Unlike in James Arcadi's newly presented conception of the Eucharist, for Leibniz, Christ and bread and wine are not hypostatically united, cf. J. Arcadi, *An Incarnational Model of the Eucharist*, Cambridge 2018. Indeed, in *De incarnatione Dei seu de unione hypostatica* (1669–1671) Leibniz interprets the hypostatic union as a relation between two unified substances, where the first carries its *principium actionis* within itself but still acts through the *principium actionis* of the second substance, cf. A VI, 1, N. 18, pp. 532–535. Since the words of consecration of the priest result in a change of the concurring mind, nothing remains of the concurring mind that before was united with the bodies of bread and wine. The former concurring mind gives way to the mind of Christ, which henceforth is responsible for the substantial unity of these bodies. Thus, for Leibniz, after the consecration, there is no "space" for two principles of motion in bread and wine that could enter into any interrelationship, such as that of hypostatic union. It also follows that Leibniz's eucharistic metaphysics seems to be incompatible with the classical Lutheran doctrine of consubstantiation.
- 54 "Transsubstantionem definitio formae Substantialis mutationem" A VI, 1, N. 15, p. 511.
- 55 In the 1670s, Leibniz understands the essence of mind as *conatus*, consisting in an unextended point, cf. Goldenbaum, "Ein Lutheraner am katholischen Kurmainzischen Hof" (see note 13), pp. 29–32.

Me, who I am a follower of the Augsburg Confession, have tried to prove the possibility of a Real Presence, but have unexpectedly come to the same conclusion as transubstantiation, and to the conclusion that transubstantiation and Real Presence ultimately amount to the same. Therefore, the controversy in the Church exists only because one side is not understood by the other. Hence, I say that transubstantiation, properly understood as it was conceived by the Council of Trent and as I have explained it, especially according to the principles of St. Thomas, does not contradict the Augsburg Confession, but even follows from it<sup>56</sup>.

Since there can be real presence only in the mode of substantial unity of a concurring mind and a body, Christ can be present in bread and wine “*vere, realiter et substantialiter*”<sup>57</sup> exclusively in the mode of a change of the concurring mind, which ipso facto is a transubstantiation. For this reason, Leibniz comes to believe that the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist, if formulated against the background of his early speculative metaphysics, coincides with the doctrine of the Real Presence held by the Lutherans too.

Leibniz’s theory of Christ’s Real Presence in the Eucharist, moreover, has far-reaching consequences for the Lutheran doctrine of ubiquity. Against Calvin’s objection that Christ could not be really present in the Lord’s Supper because he was, after all, seated at the right hand of the Father, Lutheran theologians endeavored to show that divine omnipresence can solve Calvin’s objection. Through the hypostatic union, the human nature of Christ shares in the attributes of the divine nature and thus also in divine omnipresence. By participation in God’s omnipresence, the Body of Christ can be present in different places simultaneously<sup>58</sup>. This presupposes a special understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum*: What can be said with regard to one of the two natures of Christ can also be said of the other nature qua hypostatic union. Thus, if omnipresence can be said of the divine nature, it must also be said of the human nature, from which it follows that Body of Christ, as a direct consequence of his human nature, can also be omnipresent<sup>59</sup>. Although Leibniz is able to capture metaphysically the Lutheran concern for the omnipresence of the Body of Christ in principle, it is no longer the hypostatic union and the *communicatio idiomatum* as theological instruments which guarantee this possible omnipresence, but rather the possibility of a mind – and thus also of the spirit of

56 “Ego qui Augustanae Confessioni addictus sum, cum laborarem aliquando in demonstranda possibilitate Praesentiae Realis, incidi praeter spem meam eadem opera in Transsubstantiationem, imo reperi Transsubstantiationem Praesentiamque Realem in intima ultimaque Analysisi in se invicem contineri et indetantum litem in Ecclesia esse, quod alter alteri non intelligatur. Ajo igitur Transsubstantiationem sane intellectam, ut a Concilio Tridentino concepta, et ex principiis D. Thomae inprimis a me explicata est, nihil adversari Confessioni Augustanae, imo ex ea sequi”, A VI, 1, N. 15, p. 516.

57 *Enchiridion symbolorum, definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum* (see note 20), no. 1636.

58 This doctrine differs from impanation theories in that the latter claim that Christ, in the Eucharist, is unified with bread and wine in the same way as the two natures are unified in Christ. See, for example, J. M. Arcadi, “A Panpsychist Panentheistic Incarnational Model of the Eucharist”, in: *Panentheism and Panpsychism. Philosophy of Religion Meets Philosophy of Mind* (= *Innsbruck Studies in Philosophy of Religion* 2), ed. by G. Brüntrup, B. P. Göcke, and L. Jaskolla, Leiden 2020, pp. 253–272.

59 This understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum* was massively attacked by Calvinist and Catholic theologians in particular: What can be said about one of the two natures can only be said about the one person of Jesus Christ, but not about the other nature.

Jesus Christ – to simultaneously perform several acts of thought, thereby concurring with several bodies at the same time and thus being able to be simultaneously present in different places. For Leibniz, the mind is characterized by thinking. Moreover, a mind can in principle simultaneously think different things<sup>60</sup> – at least the mind of an eternal God<sup>61</sup>. Since a mind as *principium actionis* can, by simultaneous acts of thinking, concur with different bodies, it can be present at different places at the same time. And since the same is true of the mind of Christ, which through consecration within the Holy Mass as a substantial form gives the bodies of bread and wine their substantial unity, the mind of Christ can therefore be simultaneously present in different places<sup>62</sup>. By identifying the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist with the substantial unity of the mind of Christ, concurring with the bodies of bread and wine, Leibniz demonstrates that the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation and the Lutheran doctrine of ubiquity are closer to each other than controversial theology suggests.

Thus, Leibniz seems to kill three birds with one stone: First, he can, thanks to his new philosophy, reconcile the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, as taught by the Fourth Lateran Council and the Council of Trent, with Cartesian mechanism. Furthermore, he can show, that there can be Real Presence only in the mode of transubstantiation in the sense of a change of the concurring mind that gives a body its substantial unity. And finally, he can sufficiently integrate the Lutheran doctrine of ubiquity into his Eucharistic metaphysics.

Two possible objections to Leibniz's approach to the Eucharist should be anticipated: Why is the mind of Christ the substantial form that exclusively, after consecration, gives bread and wine in the Eucharist their substantial unity, and not God's mind, the substantial form that gives other inanimate bodies their substantial unity? Christ could be substantially present in all inanimate bodies in Leibniz's framework if Christ's, rather than God's, mind concurs with those bodies. Leibniz could parry this objection by appealing to Scripture and theology: Christ obviously has decided to take exclusively the bread and the cup of wine, and no other inanimate bodies, into his hands and said "this is my body", "this is my blood"<sup>63</sup>. Christ himself seems to have determined that he would be present merely in these bodies, even though he *might be* equally present in all other inanimate bodies.

But does not the Christian, according to Leibniz's approach, receive the mind rather than the Body of Christ? The Catholic Church has always opposed a merely symbolic view of Christ's presence in the Eucharist. At the same time, a hyper-realistic view – as it was still held in 1059 at the Synod of Rome<sup>64</sup> – was overcome with the Fourth Lateran

60 Thus, Leibniz writes: "Mens potest plura simul cogitare" (A VI, 1, N. 15, p. 510).

61 For Leibniz, who conceives God primarily as a perfect mind, God even simultaneously thinks infinitely many thoughts. See in detail J. L. Propach, "Why God Thinks what He is Thinking? An Argument against Samuel Newlands' Brute-Fact-Theory of Divine Ideas in Leibniz's Metaphysics", in: *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 13/3 (2021), pp. 171–185, here: pp. 174–177.

62 Cf. A VI, 1, N. 15, p. 510.

63 Cf. Backus, *Leibniz. Protestant Theologian* (see note 1), p. 20.

64 Cf. *Enchiridion symbolorum, definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum* (see note 20), no. 690.

Council. The reason was that a “strong emphasis on the identity of the historical and Eucharistic bodies [leads] nevertheless to the idea of a kind of ‘repetition’ (*reiteratio*) of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross in the Eucharist”<sup>65</sup>. Thus, it is not the physical Body of Christ that the believer receives in the Eucharist. Leibniz had written to Thomasius that the body is nothing but matter and *figura*<sup>66</sup> and therefore it is not a substance *per se*, not an “*ens per se subsistens*”<sup>67</sup>, but merely an *ens per aliud*. “Therefore, the substance of the body is the unity with a sustaining [*sustentante*] mind”<sup>68</sup>. It is only the unity with a mind that gives the body its substantiality. Whatever body enters into a substantial unity with the mind of Christ – be it the physical body of Jesus Christ or Body of Christ of the Eucharist – is therefore only in the truest sense of the word *Corpus Christi*. Therefore, Leibniz can also write in *On Transubstantiation*: “Bread and wine, therefore, as bodies which are changed by the concurrence with the mind [...], are converted into the Body of Christ”<sup>69</sup>. Considering the various positions within theology, on the relationship between the Eucharistic and the historical body of Christ in the sacrament, it becomes apparent that Irena Backus’ conclusion, “[that] it is doubtful that his [Leibniz’s, X. M. P.] doctrine would have won the approval of the Roman Catholic Church”<sup>70</sup>, is a little premature and does not do justice to the complexity of the controversies surrounding the Eucharist within Catholic theology. Therefore, Leibniz’s approach should not be written off too quickly as incompatible with the Church’s teaching<sup>71</sup>.

## V. Conclusion

Leibniz reconciles Cartesian mechanism with the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist. He shows that the theological demands of the Council of Trent concerning the doctrine of the Eucharist can be met by Cartesian mechanism only if the body is granted substantiality only insofar as it is united and concurring with a mind as its substantial form.

*On Transubstantiation* fulfills what Leibniz had envisaged at the beginning of his stay in Mainz within the correspondences with Thomasius and the *Confessio naturae contra atheistas*: The reconciliation of mechanism and scholastic-Aristotelian substantial forms with the aim of defending the Christian mysteries against the criticisms of his time. Because the *principium actionis* cannot be in bodies, but only in the mind, therefore the body must be a mere accident. The *conversio substantialis*, which the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist teaches, must be understood as a change with regard to the concurring

65 H. Hoping, *Mein Leib für euch gegeben. Geschichte und Theologie der Eucharistie*, Freiburg i. Br. 2015, p. 190.

66 Cf. A II, 1, N. 10, p. 19.

67 A VI, 1, N. 15, p. 508 (my emphasis).

68 “*Corporis igitur Substantia est unio cum mente sustentante*”, A VI, 1, N. 15, p. 509 (my emphasis).

69 “*Panis igitur et vinum tanquam corpora, mutata mente concurrente [...] transsubstantiatur in Corpus Christi*”, A VI, 1, N. 15, p. 509.

70 Backus, *Leibniz. Protestant Theologian* (see note 1), p. 21.

71 See esp. B. Dahlke, “Jesu Christi Gegenwart im Altarsakrament. Zum Zusammenhang spätmittelalterlicher und frühreformatorischer Debatten”, in: *Catholica* 73 (2019), pp. 266–288.

mind that gives to the accidents their substantial unity. It is no longer the universal mind of God, but rather the mind of Christ that, after consecration, gives the accidents of bread and wine their substantial unity. Since Leibniz can show that the teaching of the Council of Trent concerning the Eucharist can be reconciled with his modification of the Cartesian mechanism, and likewise that transubstantiation, real presence, and ubiquity are different sides of the same coin, he can say in his short work, *De vera methodo philosophiae et theologiae ac de natura corporis*, written between 1673 and 1675, that the metaphysical speculations of those days have been of great importance “for the true piety and peace of the churches”<sup>72</sup>.

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72 “Quanti autem momenti sint haec Theoremata ad solida pietatis constituenda fundamenta, [...], ad Ecclesiae pacem, [...]”, A VI, 3, N. 10, p. 159.